佐武と市捕物控 5

―暫―

石森章太郎

SHOGAKUKAN BUNKO

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デザイン　星井ヒロテル
カバー装画　角田純男

佐武と市捕物控 5
石森章太郎

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佐武と市捕物控⑤

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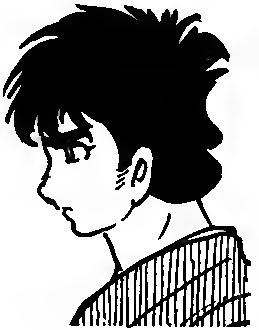
小学館文庫

Shogakukan Bunkos
Sabu and Ichi's
Detective Stories
Volume 5
By Shotaro Ishinomori



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Sabu and Ichi's Detective Stories Volume 5 Contents

Chapter 23: A Moment
Chapter 24: The North Wind is the Black Horse's Neigh
Chapter 25: Raven
Chapter 26: Ohaguro Tenement House
Chapter 27: The Burst Drum
Chapter 28: Demon
Chapter 29: Low Tide

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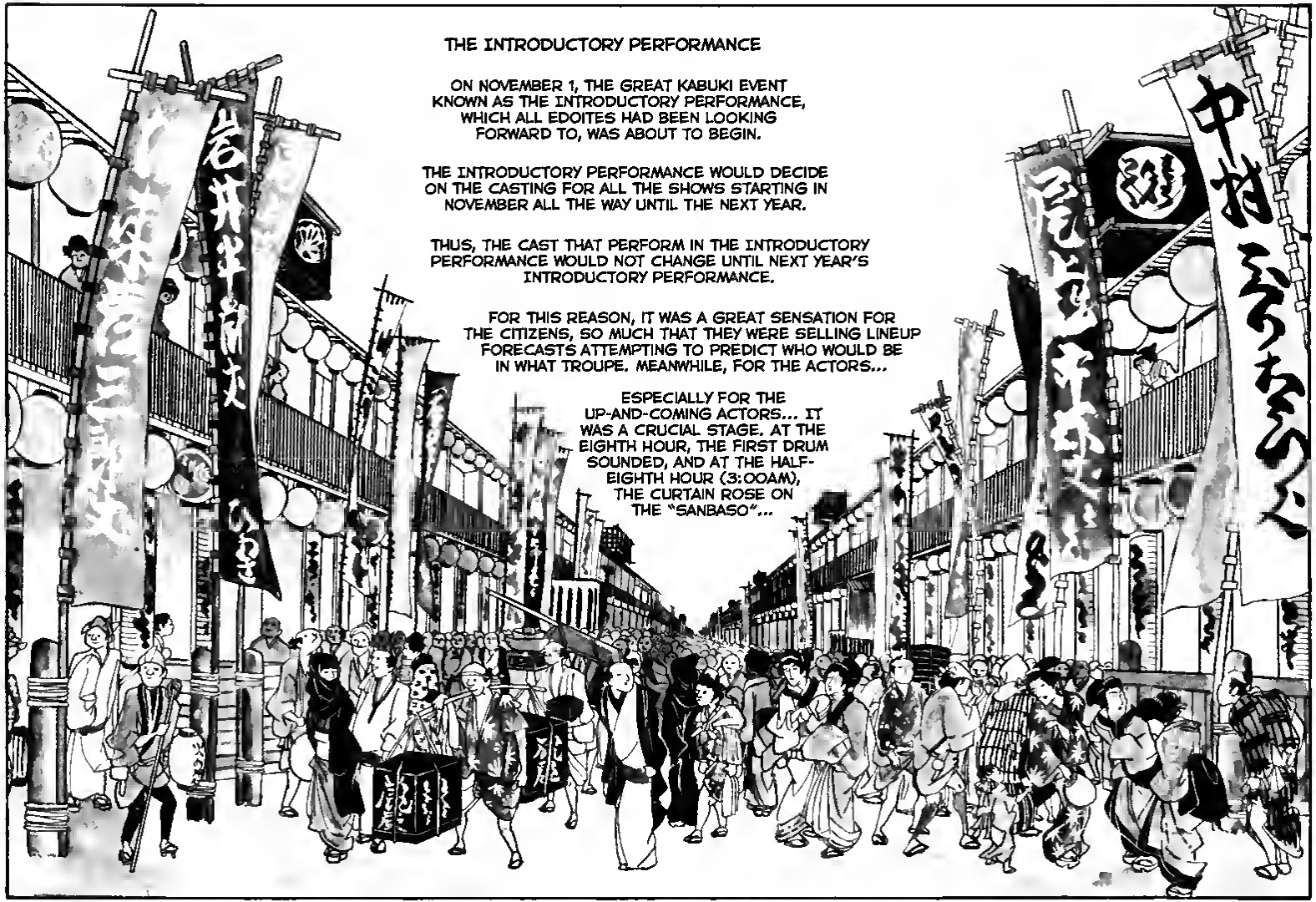
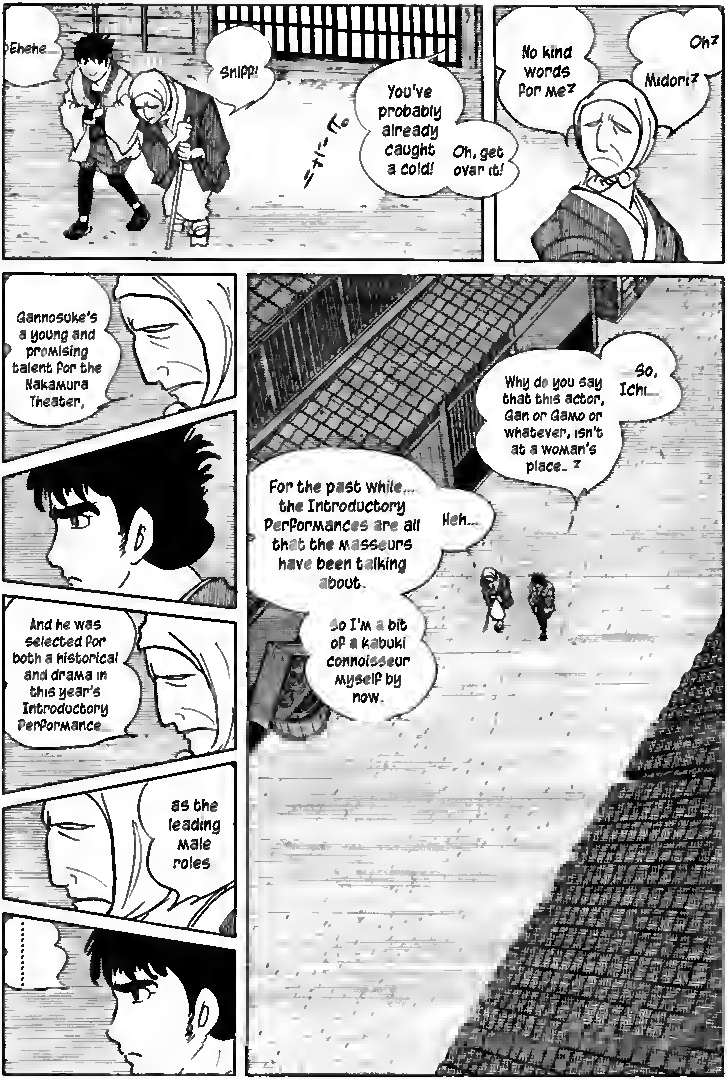
Chapter 23: A Moment


THE INTRODUCTORY PERFORMANCE
ON NOVEMBER 1, THE GREAT KABUKI EVENT KNOWN AS THE INTRODUCTORY PERFORMANCE, WHICH ALL EDOITES HAD BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO, WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN.
THE INTRODUCTORY PERFORMANCE WOULD DECIDE ON THE CASTING FOR ALL THE SHOWS STARTING IN NOVEMBER ALL THE WAY UNTIL THE NEXT YEAR.
THUS, THE CAST THAT PERFORM IN THE INTRODUCTORY PERFORMANCE WOULD NOT CHANGE UNTIL NEXT YEAR'S INTRODUCTORY PERFORMANCE.
FOR THIS REASON, IT WAS A GREAT SENSATION FOR THE CITIZENS, SO MUCH THAT THEY WERE SELLING LINEUP FORECASTS ATTEMPTING TO PREDICT WHO WOULD BE IN WHAT TROUPE. MEANWHILE, FOR THE ACTORS...
ESPECIALLY FOR THE UP-AND-COMING ACTORS... IT WAS A CRUCIAL STAGE. AT THE EIGHTH HOUR, THE FIRST DRUM SOUNDED, AND AT THE HALF-EIGHTH HOUR (3:00AM), THE CURTAIN ROSE ON THE "SANBASO"...

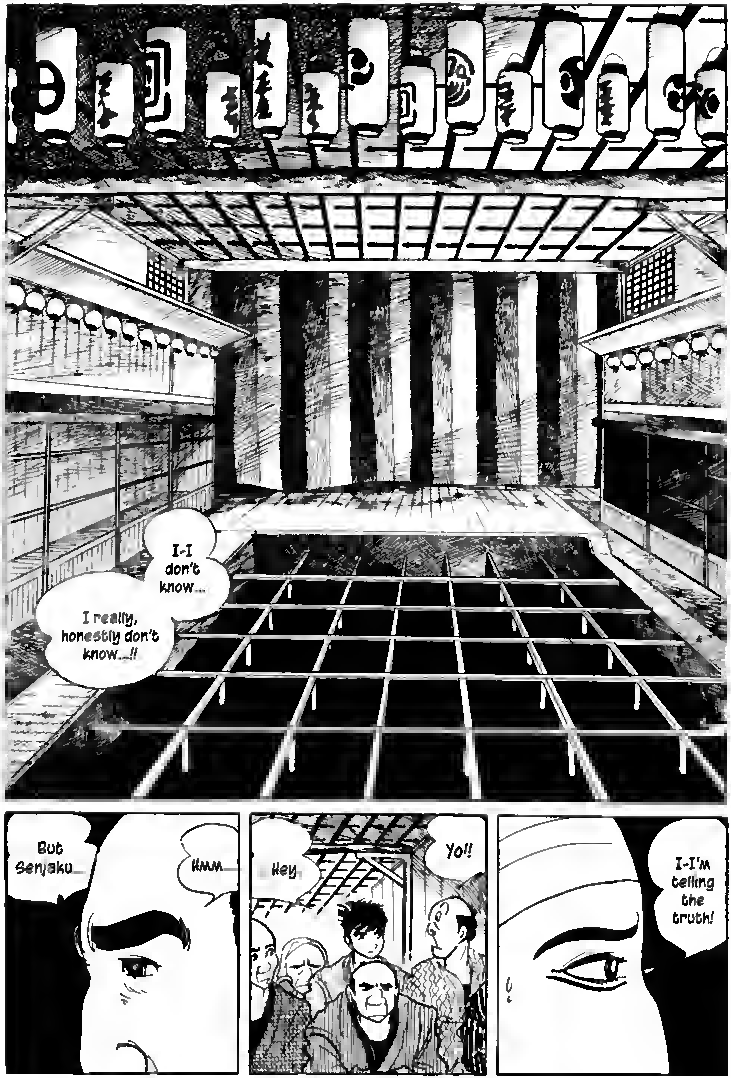
Sabu!
Get up, Sabu!
Let's go see the plays!
Uhh
W-What!?
You've gotta be joking!
Y-
Only the hicks staying at the Bakuro district go see them from the beginning!
Let's go see the plays.. over at Nakamura Theater!
W-What did you just say?

.....
...An actor at Nakamura Theater named Gannosuke... went missing!
Before the curtain opens, even ..!
But we have to go before the hicks!
Somewhere around there!
Let's see... Either at the end of the histories or the beginning of the domestic dremes...
W-When's he up..?
IF possible, before the play starts
A watchman just came by... and he wants all the townsfolk to find him as soon as possible
What time is it now?
So we have until daybreak
No wonder I'm so tired!
Tch...
It should be around... the ninth or half-ninth hour (12:00 or 1:00)!
And on the day of the Introductory Performance, no less!
And why would he go missing ...?

I'll bet he's off fooling around at one of his mistress' places!
Hmpf
I wouldn't know that...
No, he's not.
I was actually on my way home... and I saw the watchman running by... or heard, I should say... Hehe...
Yeah, that's a lie...
Huh? What're Ichi? you doing here?
Hehhe...
Oh, I was just thinking of going to see the Introductory Performances...
And it's so late at night, too...
Hmm
You're just as curious as ever
Be sure you don't catch a cold, Sabu!
Well, we'd better get going...
Tch
Oh, no, this is just me being kind and wanting to help you out any way I can...

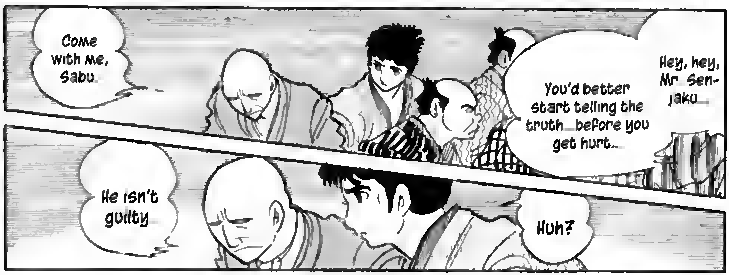

Ehehe
Sniff!
You've probably already caught a cold!
Oh, get over it!
No kind words for me?
Oh?
Midori?
So, Ichi...
Why do you say that this actor, Gan or Gamo or whatever, isn't at a woman's place..?
Heh...
For the past while... the Introductory Performances are all that the masseurs have been talking about.
So I'm a bit of a kabuki connoisseur myself by now.
Gannosuke's a young and promising talent for the Nakamura Theater,
And he was selected for both a historical and drama in this year's Introductory Performance
as the leading male roles

...Hmm...
This is his big break of a lifetime! He's bound to be thrilled!
I don't think even the sickest pervert would care about women at such a time...
I hear,
the last anyone saw him was last evening...
So... About when did Gannosuke go missing...?


I-I don't know...
I really, honestly don't know...!!
But Senjaku...
Hmm...
Hey...
Yo!!
I-I'm telling the truth!

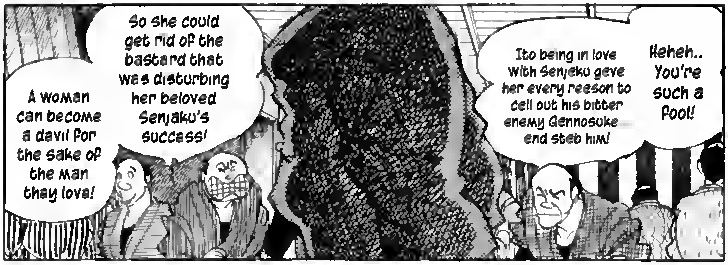
One of Gannosuke's patrons invited me, so I was tagging along... and then ..
Was this patron, by chance... a woman!?
But last evening... Just slightly before Gannosuke disappeared, you were conversing and laughing ..
You wouldn't even say a word to each other!
In fact, I hear you were on bad terms.
You and Gannosuke were rivals in the trade.
T-That was because...
But! I've never met her before!
That's Ito ..
N-No!
And she was the daughter of Kyoya, whom you are on good terms with, right!?
Don't lie to me!
He definitely got them confused!!
H-He got them confused!
But the old doorman was certain it was Ito.

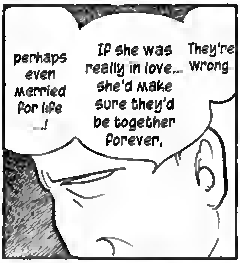
Gannosuke... was one step ahead of you and got the lead parts..
You held that against him... and you had your crush, Kyoya's daughter, join Gannosuke's entourage so you could draw him outside...
and have someone... kidnap him or kill him!
That's about how it went, right?
Well?
T-T... That's too far!
T-That's just... going too far!!

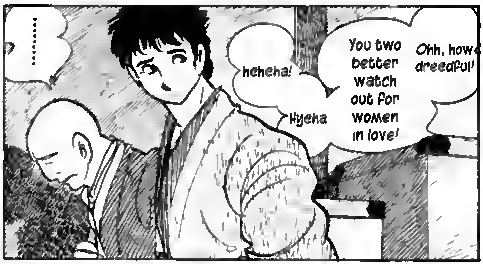

Hey, hey, Mr. Senjaku...
You'd better start telling the truth... before you get hurt...
Huh?
He isn't guilty...
Come with me, Sabu.

So why don't you... go investigate this on your own?
And that all proves his innocence...
B-But the proof's all there!
but he can't be that inept to come up with a plan that's discovered so easily
They talk about inept actors...
start from the old doorman ...!
I mean,
And .. what do you mean...?
Hah
I seen that girl wear it many a time before...
It was a fancy one, with autumn leeves on a white ground...
That's right!
Kuh?
What!?
My eyes may not be what they used to be, but I saw the pattern on her garment!
Yes, yes, I'm sure of it!
Pattern on her garment .!?
G-So you didn't see her face!?

B-But I swear that was Kyoya's daughter!!
She was pacing the other way...
W-Well, her pace was...
H-Her pace?
Kyoya's daughter...?
She's not here!?
Yeah, no one's seen her since last evening.
But we've already assumed that she's absconded by now.
Yes, we just sent two or three people to look for her!
But... it just doesn't make sense...
...and if Ito was the one that did the deed... and she was seen... it would make it harder for her to see Senjaku!
If that woman was Kyoya's... if she was Ito...
Exactly, Sabu.
She wouldn't enjoy inviting Gannosuke to her place!
Ito was in love with Senjaku!
Yeah!


A woman can become a devil for the sake of the man they love!
So she could get rid of the bastard that was disturbing her beloved Senjaku's success!
Ito being in love with Senjaku gave her every reason to sell out his bitter enemy Gennosuke and stab him!
Keheh.. You're such a fool!


perhaps even married for life...!
If she was really in love... she'd make sure they'd be together forever.
They're wrong

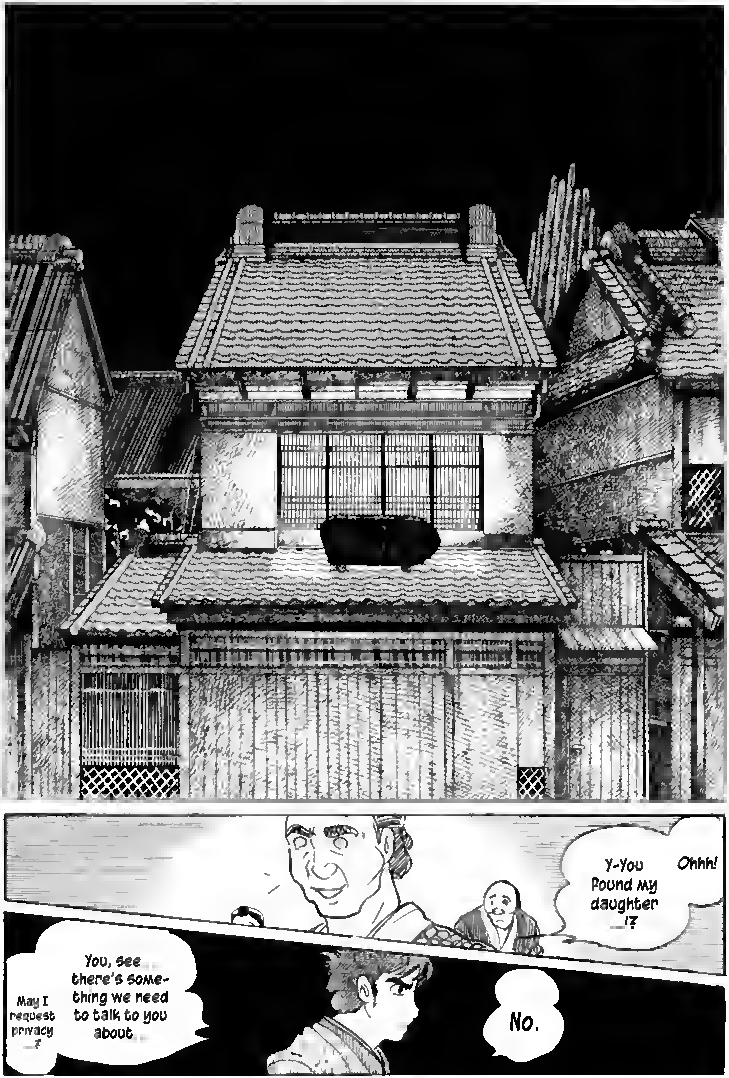

.....
hehehe!
Hyeha
You two better watch out for women in love!
Ohh, how dreadful!

Y.. Yeah.
Let's go to the troupe chief's next.
Now, Sabu

.....
He was just a better actor than Senjaku!
I didn't have any ulterior motive.
Why did I choose Gonrosuke?

But he was better in appearance than Gannosuke was. And that became the cause of stumbling.
Senjaku's acting... well, it was pretty good... but too rough.
What do you mean?
that's obvious... Sabu, It means he had more female patrons.
that Senjaku had other women... aside from Kyoya's daughter...?
D-Does that mean...
I don't know.... any more than that!!
I don't know.
Tch, dammit.
How could this happen on such an auspicious day!?
You there, stop slacking off...!!
Now, now,
We have to find an actor about the same age as Gannosuke and Senjaku... who might be jealous of their acting!
Uhh...

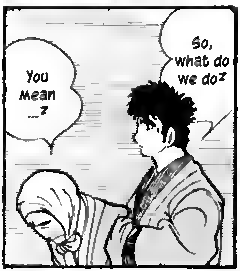
Huh?
Senjaku's..
woman?
I don't know
Yes, you see..
I don't think there were any... aside from Ito.
Senjaku's acting is quite brilliant, and he's got an excellent figure... so there were plenty of people who would call for him...
But not any women aside from Kyoya's daughter.. Right!?
Huh?
There weren't any women...?
What do you mean?
Ohhoh-hohhoh
Oh, well...
Who was it?
Tell us.
What was the name of the man who most fervently visited Senjaku...!?


Ohhh!
Y-You found my daughter—!?
NO.
You, see... there's something we need to talk to you about...
May I request privacy—?

Kyoya...
What kind of relationship did you have...
.....
Y- Yes, well...
It certainly isn't good, if anything...
you have terrible news...?
I- If you can't let my wife hear this... d-does that mean...
.....
...with Senjaku of the Nakamura theater?
What do you mean?
W-What?
I've already looked into it.. hehe!
and frequently... go over to woo Senjaku
You would... secretly..
Don't try and play dumb with me!
Urk..

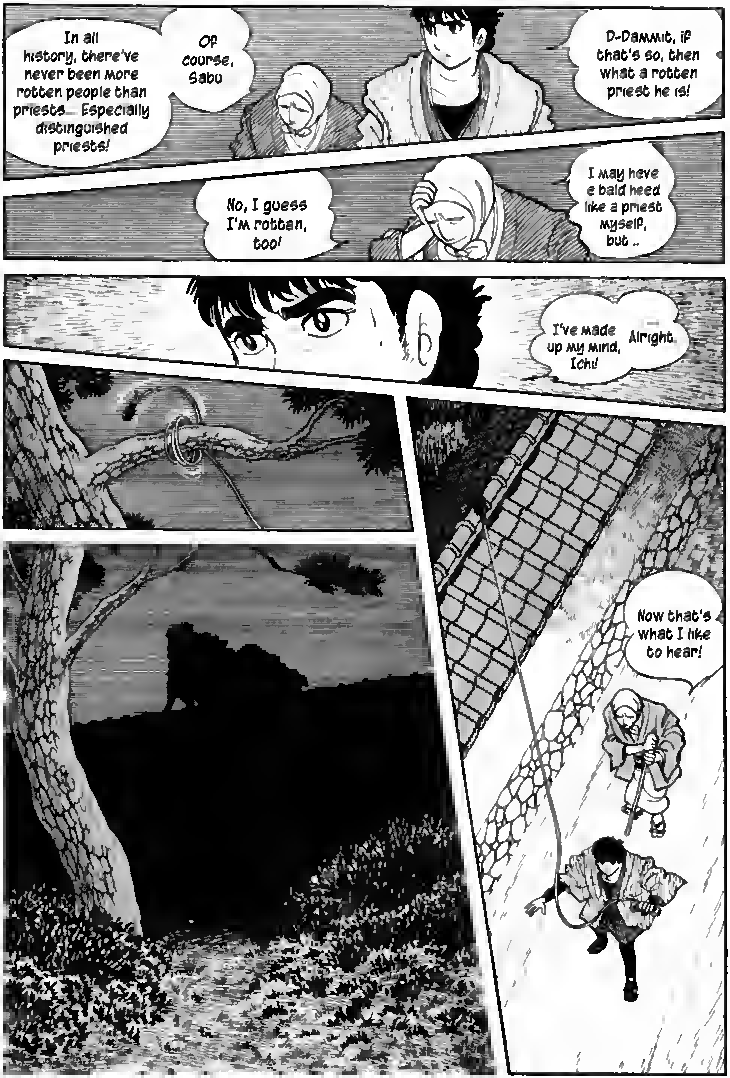
Because that would be unthinkable...
and at the end of all of it, you hid your own daughter...
Don't tell me you had a rivalry going on with your own daughter...
W-Who would do such a thing...?
O-Of course I didn't!!
S-So I thought I had to do something... a-and I told him not to lay a hand on her...!
I-I...
Well...
I-heard that My daughter Ito was infatuated with a base actor...
Heh.. hehe
Is that
really.. all there is to it?
W-What are you saying I...!?
Y-Y-Y-You bastard!!
Don't get so riled up...
Sir.
Now,
Whoa whoa..
And it could be..
that your daughter's life hangs in the balance!
you may end up with your hands bound...
If you slip up,
Heh... he...
Urrgh...

So, with that in mind... You'd better give me a honest answer, and don't skip anything..
Senjaku in his female roles...
is known for looking more feminine than most women!
I need you to believe me!!
g-gut at first it was just for my daughter's sake...!!
g-guess I did...
U-Uhh... I-I...
g-gut as I was seeing him...
I-I started to...
I know it was unbecoming...
No, but... He...
It's true!
H-He never gave me a favorable response!
W-When I found out... I...
T-There was already... another man in his life!!
.I-I used people... to find- to find out his name!
T-There wasn't anything I could do about it...
b-but I just wanted to amuse myself... so I...
Enough about that...
Just hurry!
Tell us his name...!!


So, what do we do?
You mean ...?

...Here it is, Ichi!
...Oh, really?

The lives of an actor and a girl... Maybe even two girls...
I-I know already!
Then we don't need to hesitate!
What do you think I mean!?
If this... this priest is the criminal, then he's out of my reach!
Heh... The Magistrate of Temples again?
What about it!? We're out of time!
You just have to become the Magistrate of Temples' subordinate... right here and now!
G-But...
We don't even have any hard evidence that the chief priest here is the perpetrator...
All we have are Kyoya's words
And I just don't feel right...
about doing this to someone who serves the Buddha...
But it's all the more likely if it was a priest!
If he can't have a woman, may as well have a man... See!?
Then he would get those urges!
If he's forced to be celibate...


In all history, there've never been more rotten people than priests... Especially distinguished priests!
Of course, Sabo
D-Dammit, if that's so, then what a rotten priest he is!
No, I guess I'm rotten, too!
I may have a bald head like a priest myself, but ..
I've made up my mind, Ichi!
Alright.
Now that's what I like to hear!

That's it!
...Ichi, there's a light on in there!
.....

HMM!?
Is it Kyoya's daughter!?
I-I can't tell.
She's stark naked!
She's still warm.
What else?
So she was just killed recently!
Damn!
I-It's a woman's corpse wrapped in a bamboo mat!!
What is it?
Heh
Hehehe
Nothing

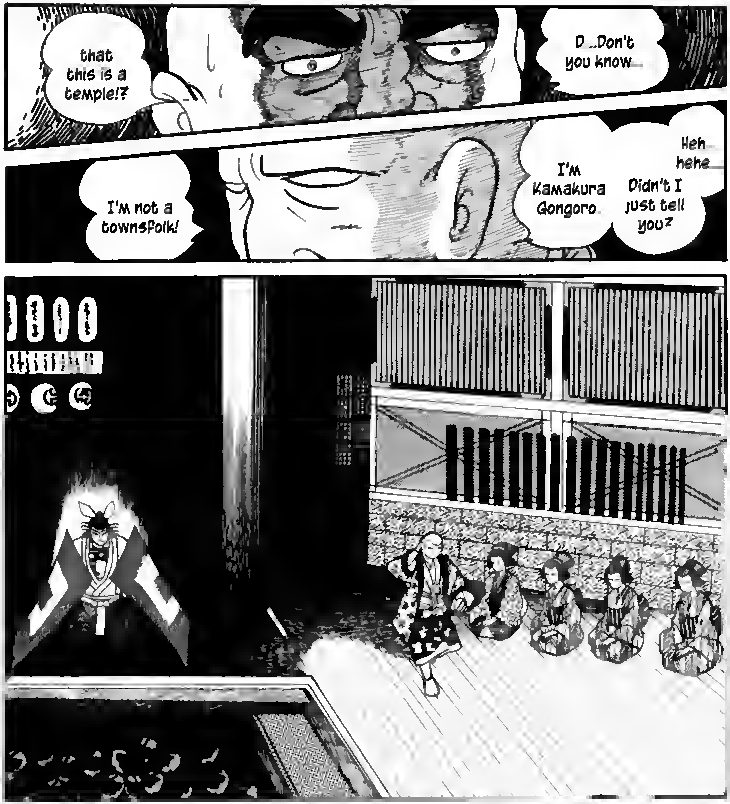
...Alright then, why don't I give you two your last rites!?
U... Urrrp...
Hehe-hehe..
You can't say your prayers with your mouths gagged!?
Don't worry
I'll read them out for you later...
Heh... Hahaha...
MMMPh!
Urrrrphh

This couple . had a secret affair_ and decided to Pullfill their forbiddan love in the afterlife .. And that's how the plot goes
Urr_ pp...
Well, you can both die happy then.
Hehehe..
And I shall preside over your marriage ..
Ito...
You... may not have your intended, but you still fell for an actor_
And that handsome man there_ shouldn't complain about having a girl as fine as you
Ehe.. Eheh_
S_ Senjaku is precious to me
And Senjaku_ Gannosuke! I was really sad that you stole the good parts away from him!
I couldn't bear to see it.
If you were just out of the picture_
I . wanted to see Senjaku happy!

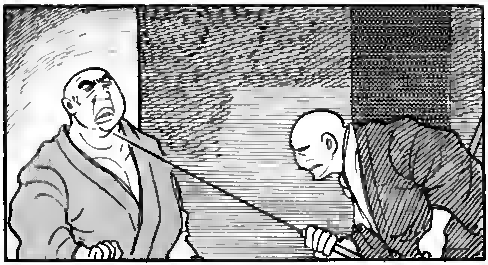
You.. tried to take Senjaku away from me!
And you .. Ito!
..I-It's two birds with one stone!!
Kill them... so it looks like a double suicide!
Get rid of them!!
Kill them!!

Stop a moment!!
Hey, you damn priest!
What the hell are you doing!?
Well!?
W-W-W-What?
Who are you!?
I'm Kamakura Gongoro
You droopy-eyed priest!

I've heard quite enough of your lines.
I don't know who that corpse lying outside is... But you made her wear Ito's clothes,
and sent her to Petch Gennosuke without knowing that this would happen...!
I bet... you paid off some whore from the Yoshiwara area!
...And once you were done with her... Well, dead men tell no tales ..!
How could you do this!?
Y...You're townsfolk, aren't you!?


that this is a temple!?
D...Don't you know...
I'm not a townsfolk!
I'm Kamakura Gongoro.
Didn't I just tell you?
Heh hehe...
Tch!!
don't crowd tha stage!
Sabu,

...
Eh-Eh-Eh, incon-ceivable!
Incon-ceivable!
カッ
カッ
カッ



Yattoko
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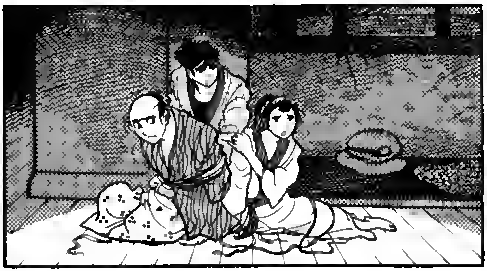

Un-
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na!

Note on this chapter:

This chapter is named after "Shibaraku", one of the most famous and representative Kabuki plays. The title translates roughly to "Stop a moment", the main character is named Kamakura Gongoro Kagemasa, hence Ichi introducing himself as Kamakura Gongoro, and the frames with the Kabuki actors in between the actual events was Ishinomori's way of paralleling the case with the Kabuki play. The phrase "yattoko toccha untoko-na" at the end is meaningless, but is derived from three words that are all vocalizations similar to "oof" or "heave-ho", and it is commonly spoken during the fight scenes of a Kabuki play.

November 1969: "A Moment" (FIN)

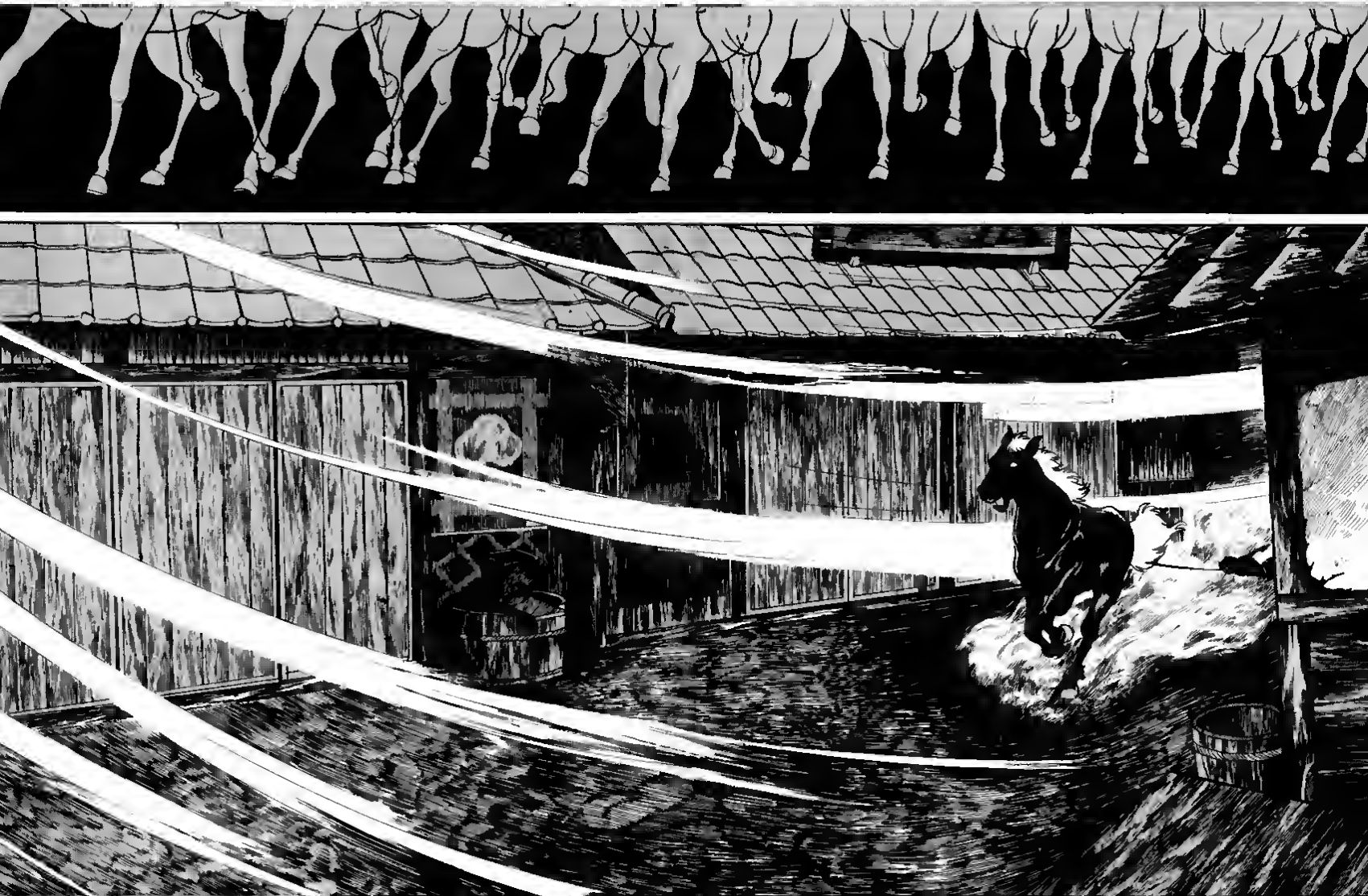
佐武と市捕物控

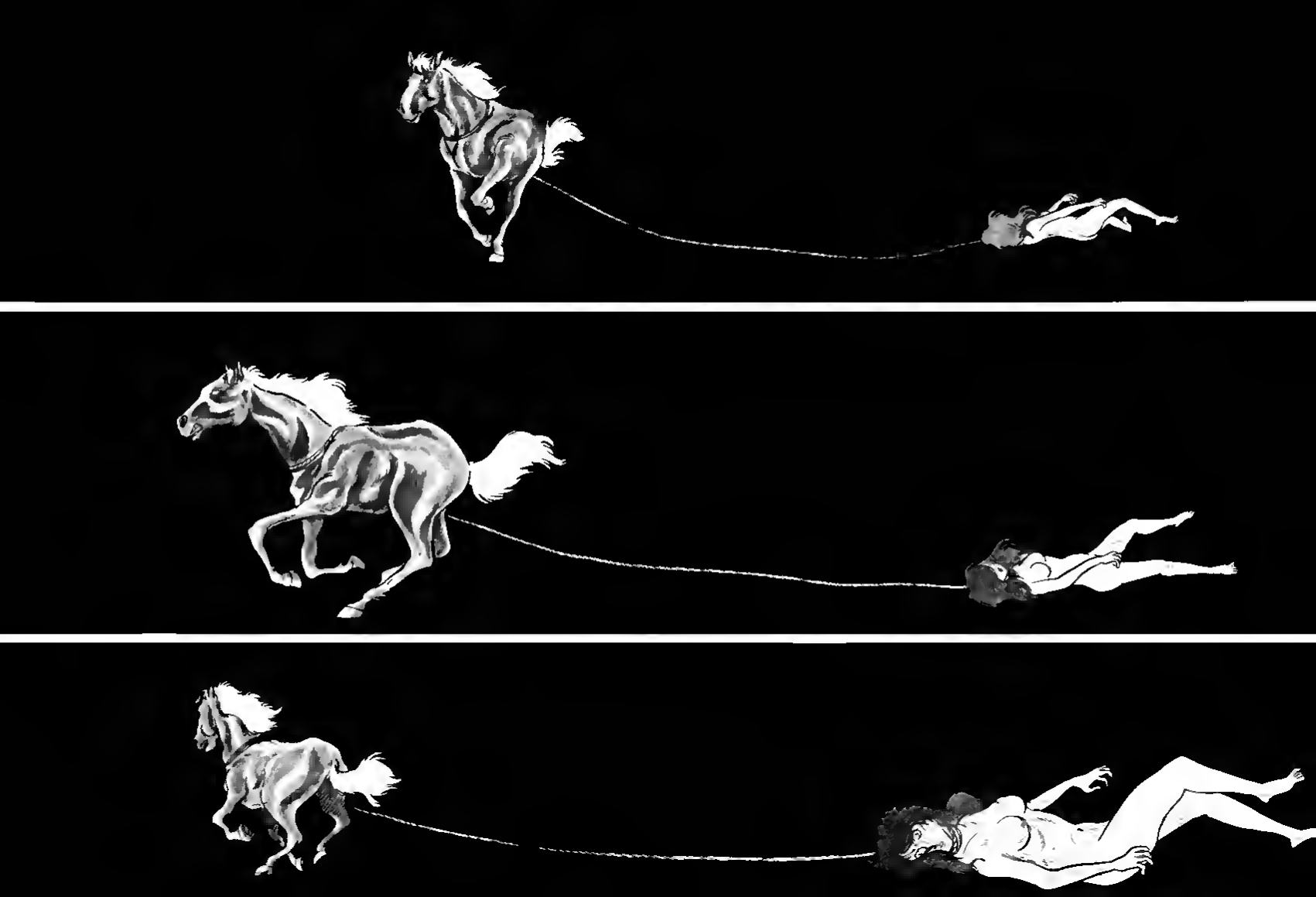
SABU & ICHI

Chapter 23
presented by
Hokuto no gun
and
Happy scans

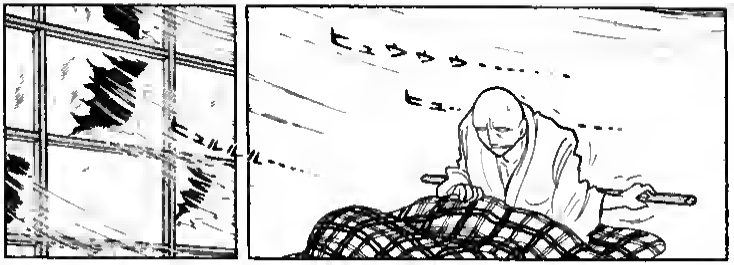
Translated by SystematicChaos
Cleaned by Wright
Typesetting by Kazuhiko

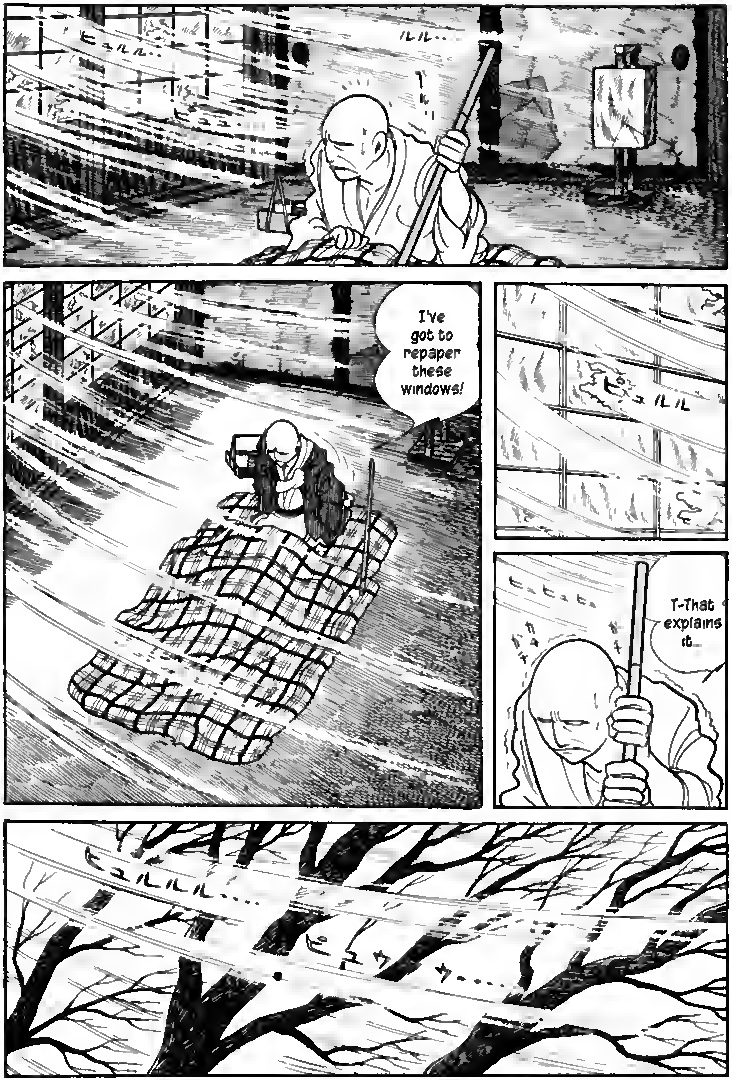
Chapter 24: The North Wind Is the Black Horse's Neigh





Ahh!




ヒュルル...
ルル...
I've got to repaper these windows!
ヒュルル
T-That explains it...
ヒュルルル...
ヒュウウ...

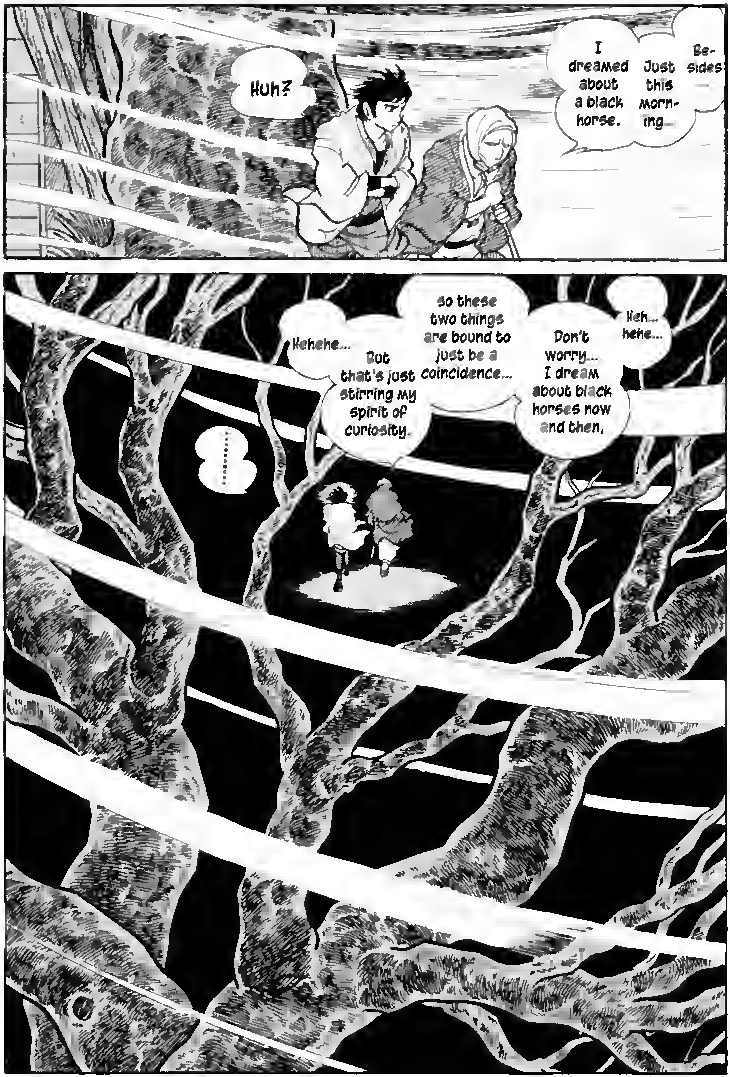
Phew, honestly... What a cold wind.
'Scuse me
Ichi!
Midori, is Sabu here?
Oh, he left last night... but he's still not back.
Huh!?
So did something happen?
...I hate this sound!

Yes.
I don't know the details, but...
Apparently... A woman was found... dead and naked, dragged by a black horse!!
W-
What!?
Oh, welcome back!
He said the tenement house was too cold... so he came here to play a game of shogi with you!
Yes.
Is Ichi here?
Yes.
Well? Have you found the victim's identity?
Hey. Working hard, I see.

At first, the victim... was as naked as the day she was born.. and she was all bloody from being dragged by the horse,
Oh?
and her name's Reiko ..
She's from a marine wholesale store across the bridge .. called Narumi..
and on top of that, her face
Her face.. was festering and scarred as if she had left it on a branding iron
Hehhe...
I'll be fine
and he said that she was definitely the first woman of Narumiya's manager...
There was a carpenter among the curious onlookers that had crowded around ..
But at dawn ..
so I thought it'd be a tough job figuring out her identity

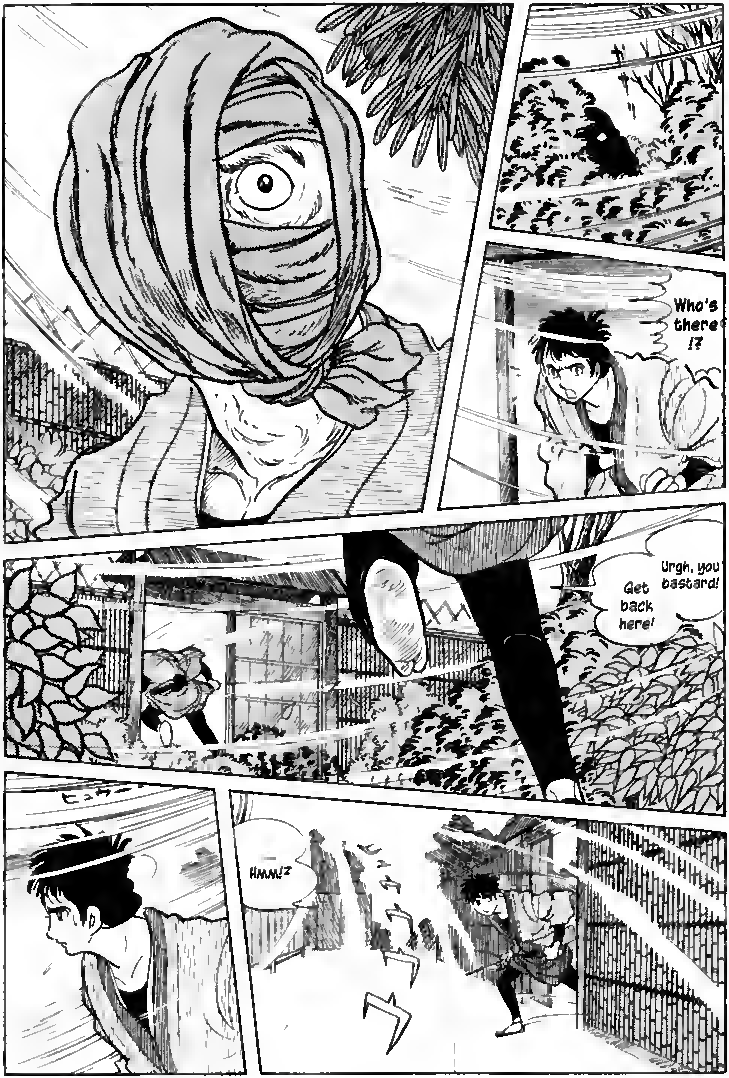
You're saying that Narumiya's had other mistresses!?
First!?
And he said he had built that woman's house ... and recently, another woman's house ..
That carpenter was a regular tradesman of Narumiya ...
Yeah, it seems that way.
You said it!
Hmm, that's astounding ... I'm jealous!"
Oh, my!
Oh, please, Father and Ichi...!
Did you have Narumiya identify the body?
So, Sabu.
Heh heh he..
...but when he heard that a black horse had dragged her..
And the body was definitely Narumiya's first woman ..
Yes, of course ... We brought him out right away
Oh?
Seems suspicious
Narumiya.. averted his eyes and went pale ..!
So, this is what I'm gonna do
Mr. Tanabe says he might have been involved with it somehow
Yes

Oh, so what about tonight...!?
I'm going to stop by the other woman's place,
then to Narumiya... to stay overnight there.. as a guard.
I won't be coming home
Be carePul Sabu
Hold on, Sabu
I'll... stay over with you!
It's... Freezing outside, Ichi.
Hehhe...
Sleeping outside won't be any different from sleeping in the tenement house.


Huh?
Besides
Just this morning...
I dreamed about a black horse.
Heh... hehe...
Don't worry... I dream about black horses now and then.
so these two things are bound to just be a coincidence...
Kehehe...
But that's just stirring my spirit of curiosity.

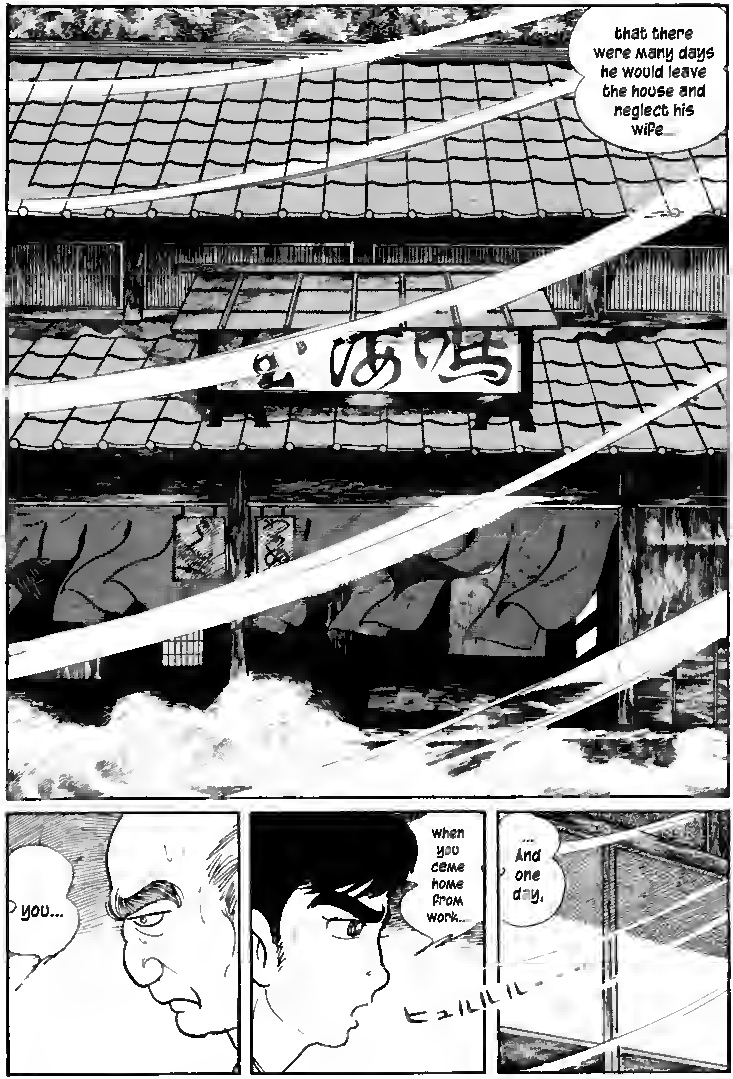
What? Yae is.. dead?
...You know about Yae!?
Normally, men would try to hide their other women...
...What an odd man...
You mean Narumiya!?
He... the master would tell me all about her.
...Yes.
has a tendency to treat other women as if they were idiots.
He...

Even besides the ones... that he built houses for, like us.. He had several other women on the side.
..I'm jealous!
after .. she's dead now, but..
after his wife betrayed him.
a long time ago..
But... He became like this...
...Could you... tell me more about her?
Huh?
Oh... but I don't know any more details...
Shhh!
Some-one's out there!
Sabu, the yard
W-What is it, Ichi!?

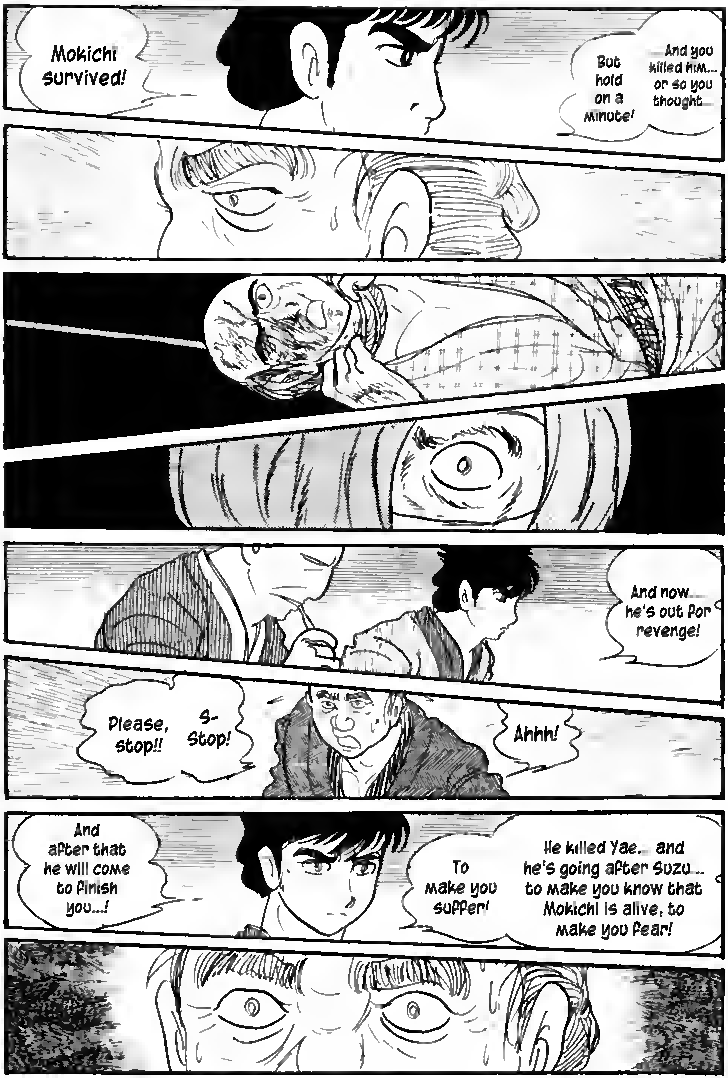

Who's there!?
Urgh, you bastard!
Get back here!
HMM!?

...Tch.
Sabu!
He sure knows how to run
What a shame! He could've been our man...

Yes, so for your own safety... Could you please continue?
Huh?
W-We don't know for sure... but it doesn't hurt to be careful!
What if someone's trying to kill me .. like they killed Yaa. .!?
I-I'm scared
We need to know everything!!
Tell us everything you know about the manager of Narumiya, even the tiniest details.
But he...
He was very fond of Some... And their marriage was one of love.
He took a woman named Some as his wife.
...Back when Narumiya's store... wasn't as big as it is now...
was so passionate about his work...


that there were many days he would leave the house and neglect his wife...
あづま
you...
when you come home from work...
ヒュルルル・・・
...And one day,

...saw your wife in bed with your head clerk!
You went mad with anger, and took the head clerk Mokichi...
and killed him!
You burned his face with a branding iron...
...Mokichi was a good-looking man...
and you wrapped a rope around his neck and made a black horse drag him...
U... Urrgh...


Mokichi survived!
But hold on a minute!
...And you killed him... or so you thought...
And now... he's out for revenge!
Please, stop!!
S-Stop!
Ahhh!
And after that he will come to finish you...!
To make you suffer!
He killed Yae... and he's going after Suzu... to make you know that Mokichi is alive, to make you fear!

H-He's going after... My daughter next!
Huh!?
M... My daughter!
A...As I was coming back from the guardhouse this morning... I-I found that thrown in here!
YOUR DAUGHTER IS NEXT. AND YOU WILL BE THE LAST... A BLACK HORSE FROM HELL WILL COME FOR YOU. FROM THE MURDERED MAN.
A-After that...
M-Mokichi is definitely alive!

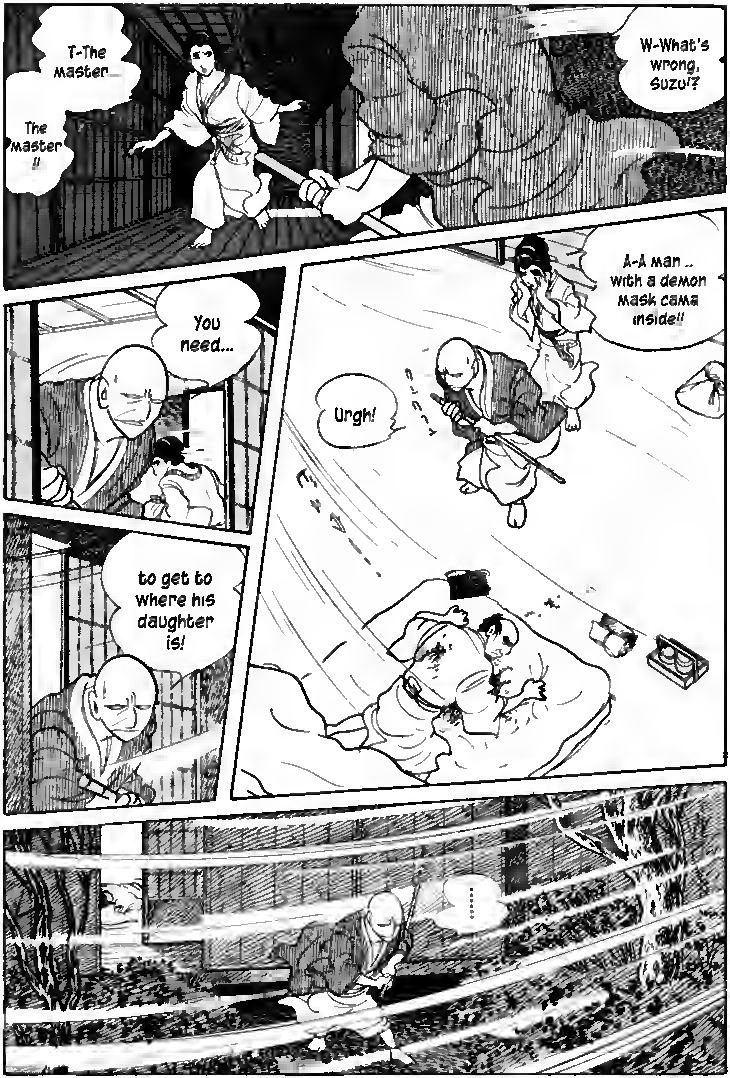
..He must have cut the rope... caught his breath... and slipped away
..I-I found the horse that ran off.. but Mokichi's corpse was not on the other end of the rope!
A Aoooough...
A-And yet... And yet...!
That's why I worked so hard!
A-All I wanted... was for Some... was for her to be happy.
How could this be!?
Sob.. H-How could this be?

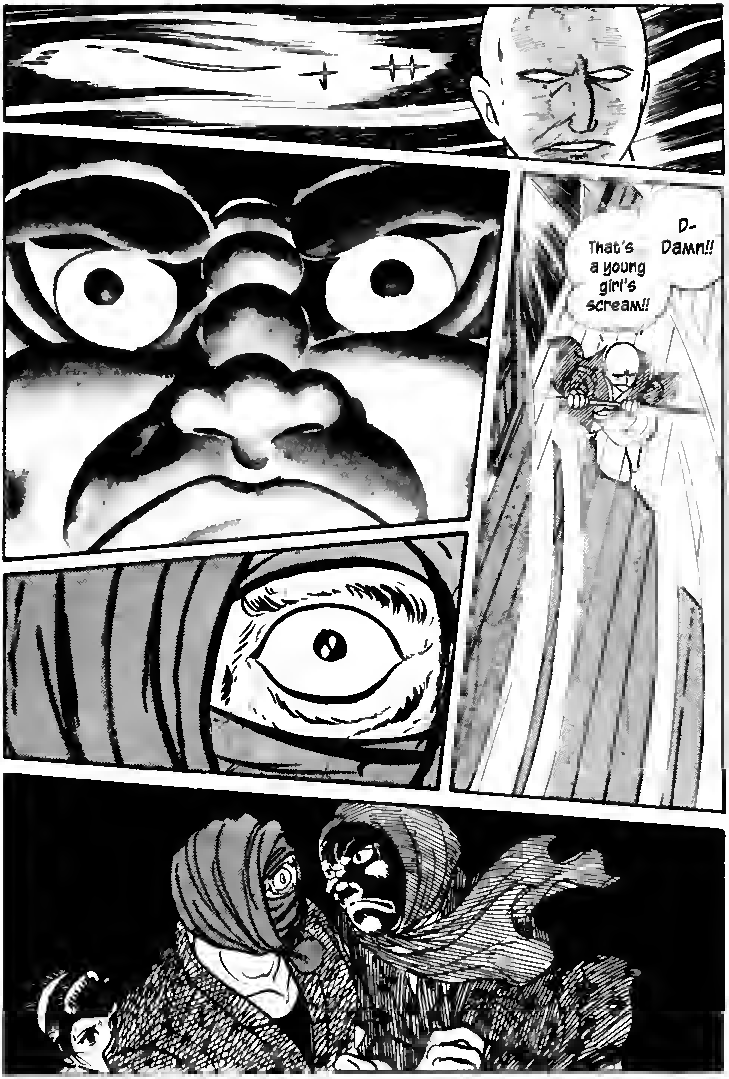
We're going to stay the night starting tonight... so you can rest assured.
I think she's terrified... so you should go to her.
...We can't just leave her alone... so we should bring Suzu here.
...Sha has no living relatives... so sha says sha wants to be near you...
P-Please... stay in the room... next to my daughter's room...
I'm counting on you.
I-Thank you
I hear that you would have nightmares about him when you were with her...
Why do you think... Suzu knew about Mokichi...?
...gut...
"The black horse is coming..." you would say!
"The black horse!
"I'll kill him! I'll kill him...!! "Damned head clerk!
"Damned Mokichi!

No idea.
..You think he's coming?
This is a fine mansion!
Still...
He managed to get his store looking like this in a mere ten-odd years.
Narumiya's a shrewd businessman!
That's why he's not well-reputed by society.

...But it seems Narumiya...
at least cares for his daughter
Well, she's the daughter of his beloved wife... whom, even after what she did, he could never bring himself to hate.
ヒュウ
Huh?
..It's the wind!
Hmm!?
No!!
It's outside!!
Ichi... watch my back!

Ohhh!?

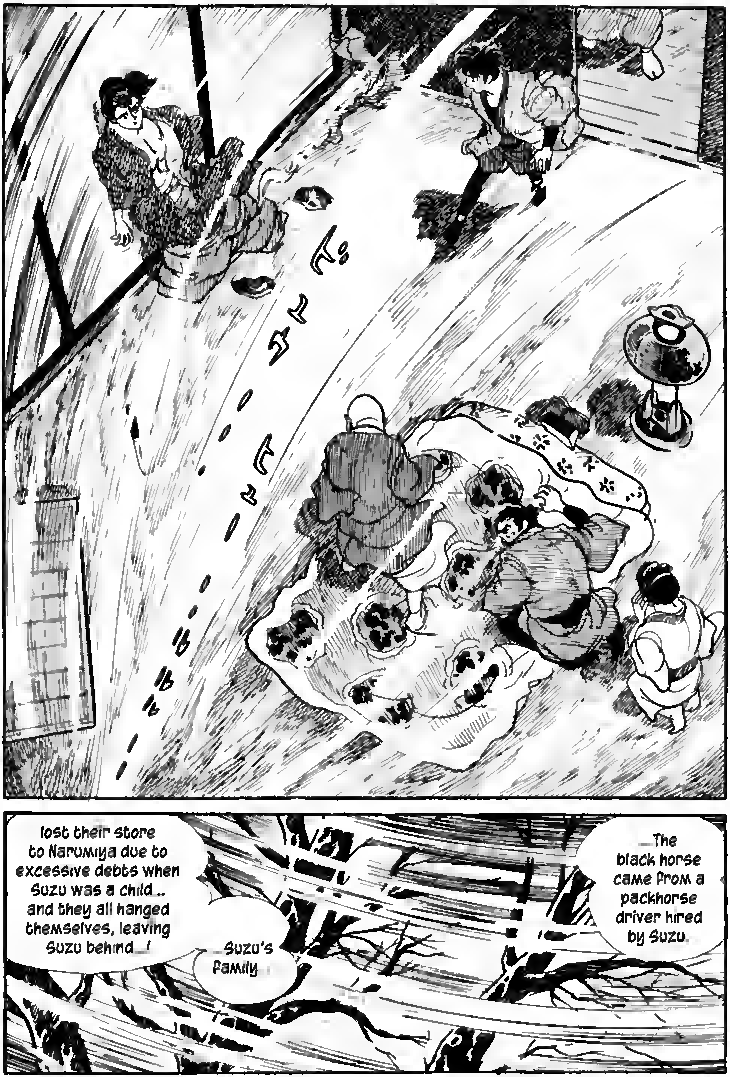

T-The Master...
The master !!
W-What's wrong, Suzu!?
A-A man .. with a demon mask cama inside!!
Urgh!
You need...
to get to where his daughter is!
.....


That's a young girl's scream!!
D-Damn!!

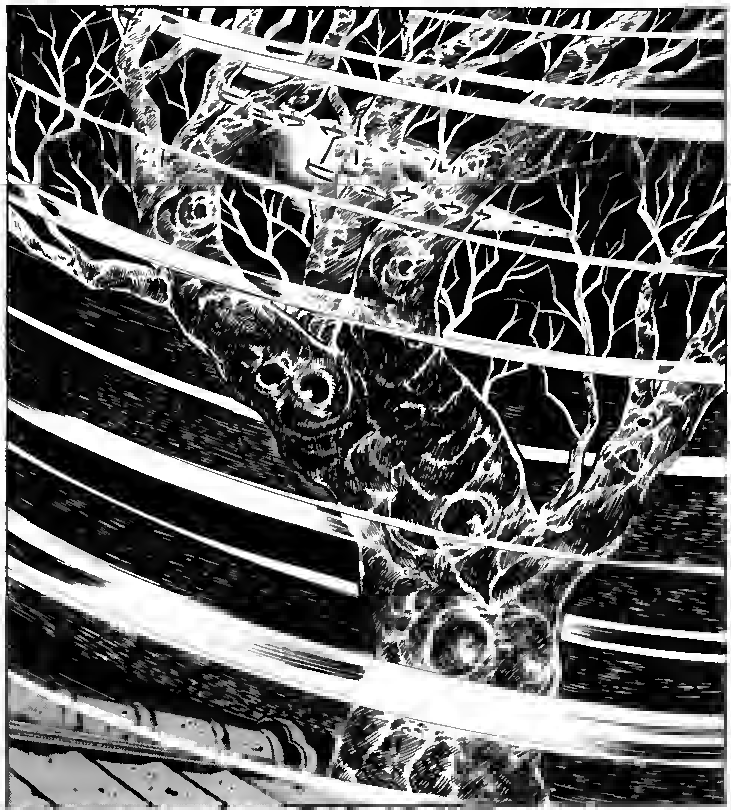
S-She isn't. Narumiya's daughter!!
I-I must slay all those who share Narumiya's blood!
M... Move! Out of my way!!
Urgh...
What!?
Mine... and Some's daughter!!
S-She's My daughter!
Moki-chi!?
You're...

Dam-
mit!!
Huh!?

Suzu!?


lost their store to Narumiya due to excessive debts when Suzu was a child... and they all hanged themselves, leaving Suzu behind...!
Suzu's family
...The black horse came from a packhorse driver hired by Suzu.

He secretly lived near Narumiya just so he could see his own daughter, and when he learned that someone was after her..
..Mokichi was the pitiful one
and used it ..
and she learned of the incident between Mokichi and Some
Suzu swore revenge, so she approached Narumiya and became his woman...



佐武と市捕物控

SABU & ICHI

Chapter 24
presented by
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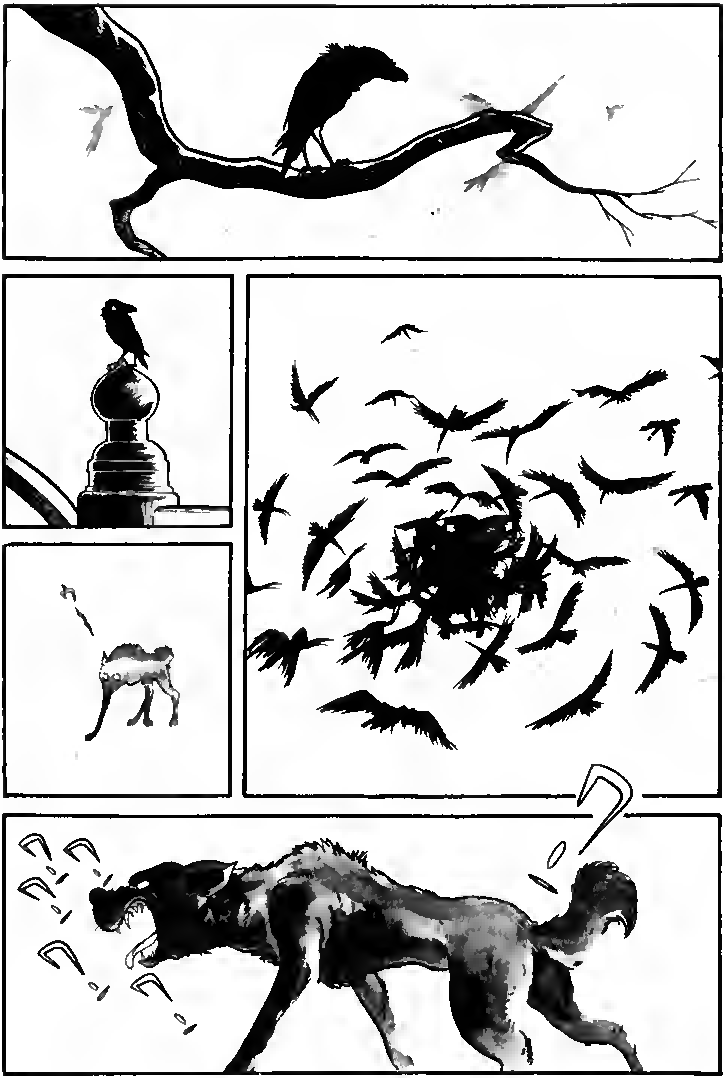
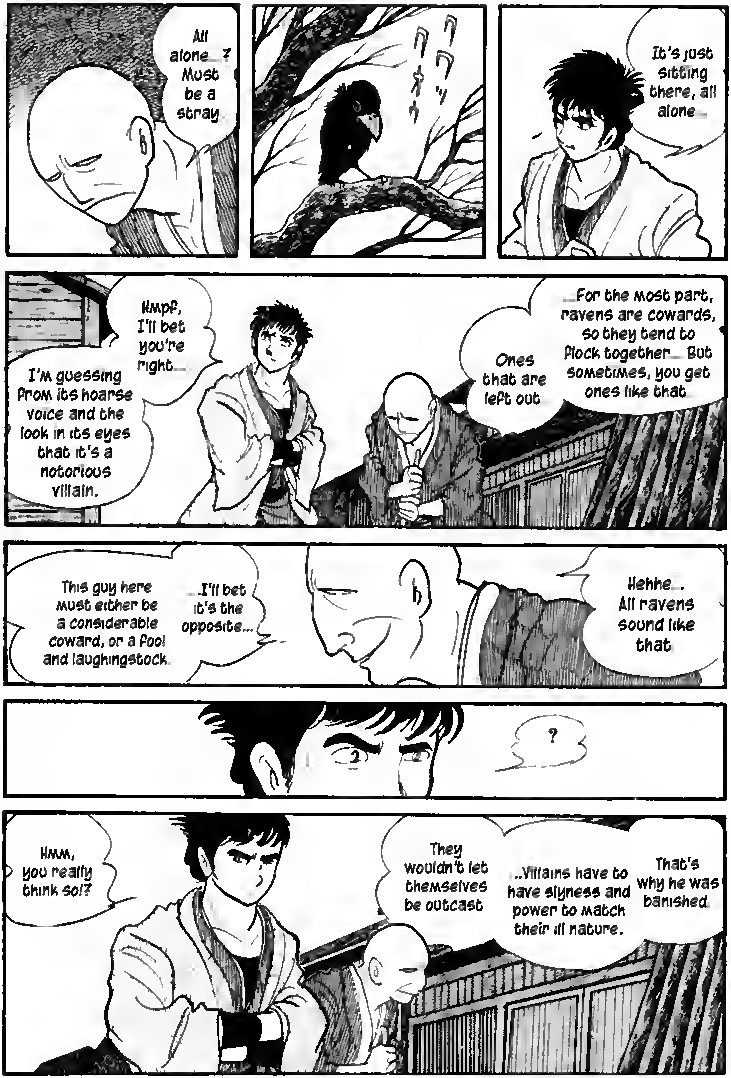
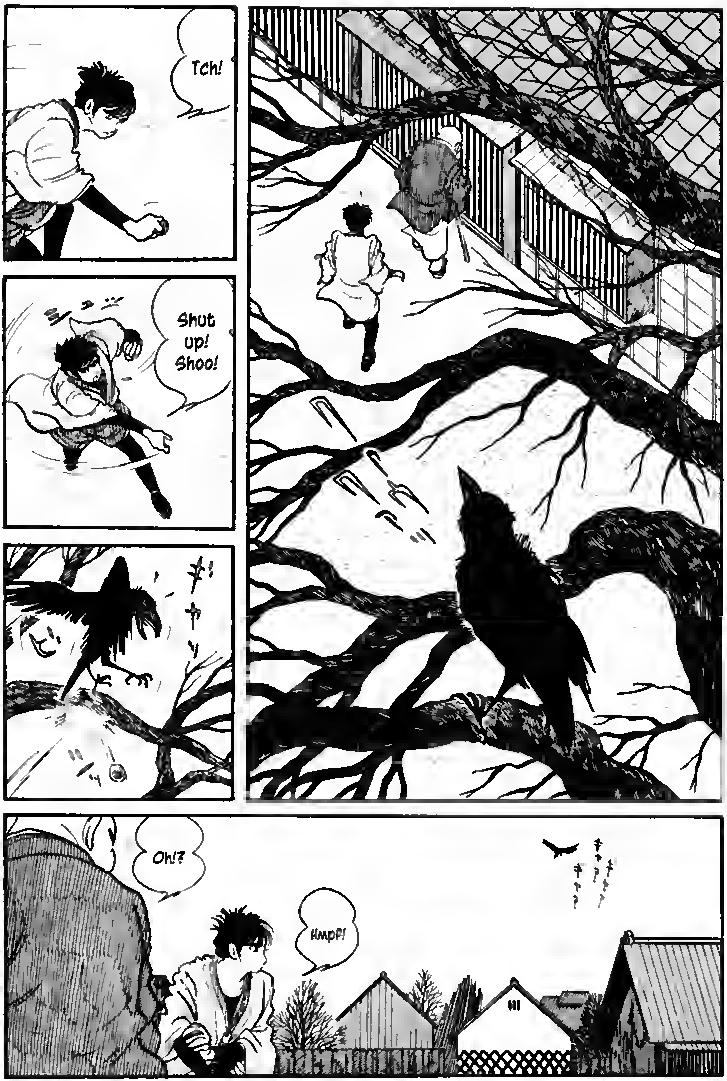
Chapter 25: Raven



Uhh...
Sabu?
...Dammit, I don't like that raven!
What are you doing here...?


All alone...? Must be a stray.
クワッ クワッ
It's just sitting there, all alone...
Hmpf, I'll bet you're right...
I'm guessing from its hoarse voice and the look in its eyes that it's a notorious villain.
Ones that are left out...
...For the most part, ravens are cowards, so they tend to flock together... But sometimes, you get ones like that.
This guy here must either be a considerable coward, or a fool and laughingstock.
...I'll bet it's the opposite...
Hehhe... All ravens sound like that.
?
Hmm, you really think so!?
They wouldn't let themselves be outcast.
...Villains have to have slyness and power to match their ill nature.
That's why he was banished.

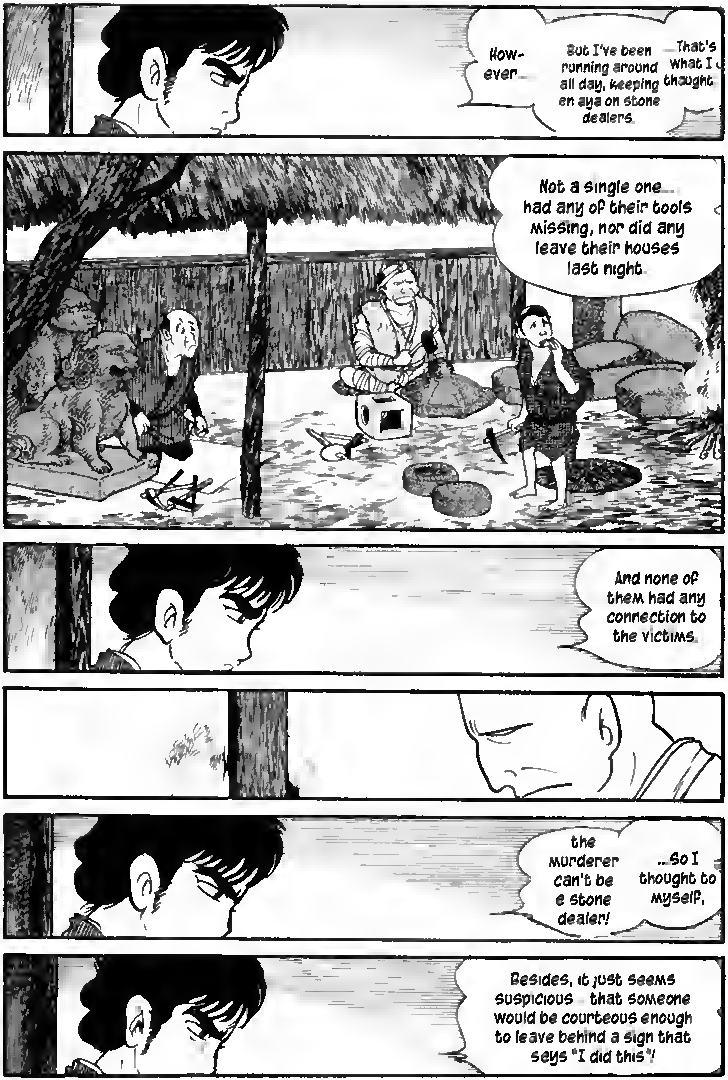

Tch!
Shut up! Shoo!
カ!カ!
Oh!?
Hmpf!

...My stomach turns whenever I see that annoying raven!
He's brought me to the loosiest places all day!
Every-thing!
Sabu... what's bothering you?
Ah-ha!
tomorrow, Ichi, I'm gonna change how I investigate this case
Huh?
Urrgh..
And you looked all day but haven't found any clues...?
The raven discovered three corpses...

...The body in the forest belonged to the nearby plasterer.
There was still the scent of alcohol on the corpse, so...
he was probably stabbed as he was walking home drunk late at night.
The body in the alley was the old pawn broker.
He was out late too, lingering at a nearby house to collect his loan...
and he was stabbed, too.

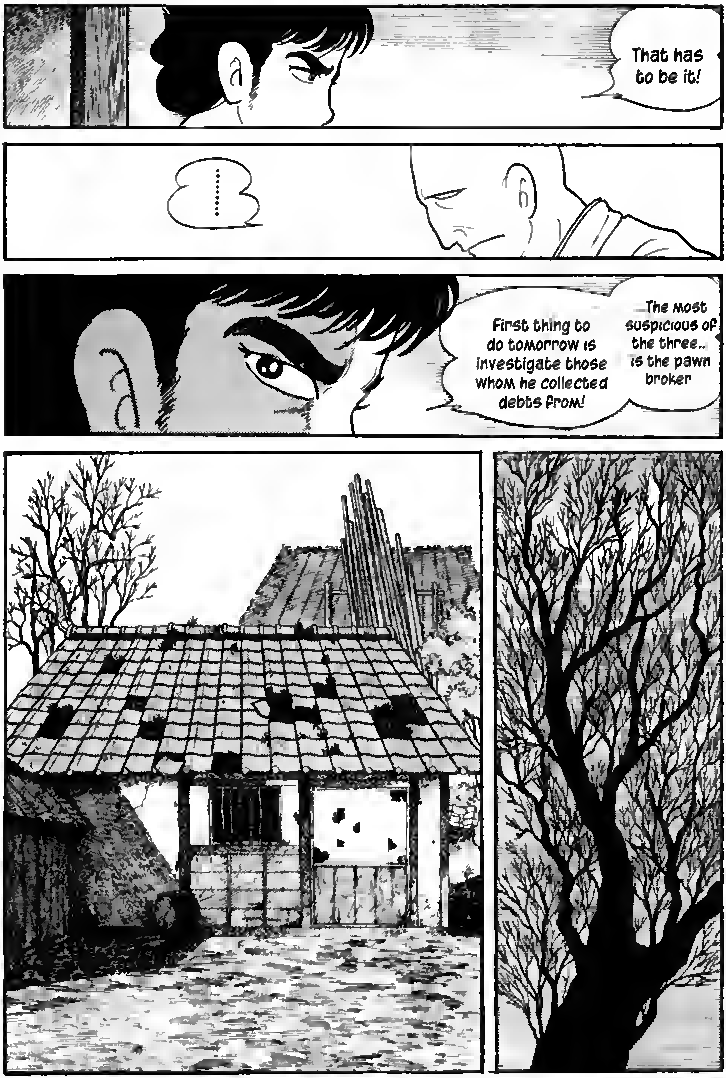
The body on the bridge was a decrepit street-walker.
She was irritated by her lack of a job, when someone called her...
And that voice spelled her demise
Hehe Sorry.
It's just your tone of voice, Sabu.
W-What's so funny!?
Heh heh heh heh ..
T-That's your tone of voice rubbing off on me!

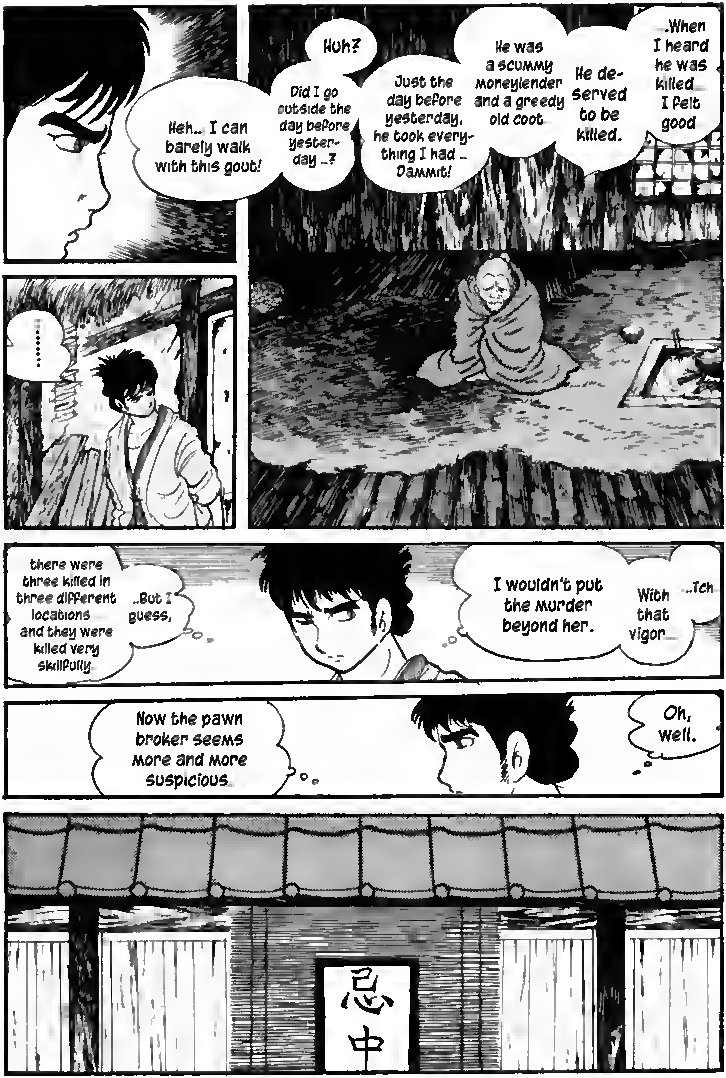
I thought that it would be an open and shut case ..
...Yeah, some stone dealer must have beaten or stabbed them...
All three were forged by a stone dealer..
...All three of the corpses had the murder weapon lying nearby.

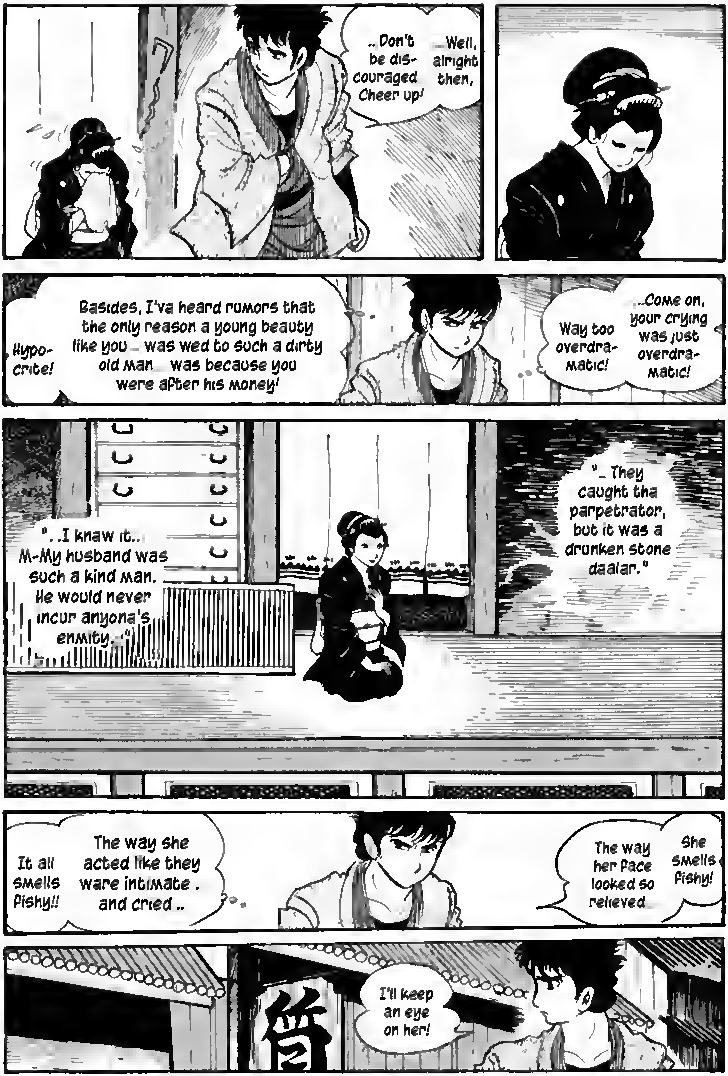

That's what I thought.
But I've been running around all day, keeping an eye on stone dealers.
However...
Not a single one... had any of their tools missing, nor did any leave their houses last night.
And none of them had any connection to the victims.
...So I thought to myself,
the murderer can't be a stone dealer!
Besides, it just seems suspicious... that someone would be courteous enough to leave behind a sign that says "I did this"!

The real murderer must have done it – to make us think that a stone dealer was the murderer
The murderer didn't drop it, it was left behind!
That's it!
...So you went and told Mr. Tanabe..
Boss Denroku had already long since brought in the murderer!
But listen to this!
I did
Of course, he was a stone dealer... As well as a drunkard and a neighborhood nuisance, and he was out late last night drinking
So he said
and he was screaming "I didn't do it! I didn't do it!"
But by that time, he had long since sobered up...
He sneered at me!
Then... that damn Denroku geezer...
So I... I told him about my idea.

"You've just lost control because I got the reward first!"
.....
but that stone dealer may have already confessed by now
it's all well and good to charge how you search,
But Sabu,
...HMM...
but when sober, he had the face of a timid, yet honest man
He may be a drunkard...
No, it wasn't him
With those types of people, there's no telling what they'll do when they snap
Have you become a physiognomist, Sabu?
Hohho!
—Someone who's connected to those three...
The murderer is somewhere out there!
No, he was definitely not the murderer!
Someone who would be tracked down even if he killed one of his targets... So he stole a stone dealer's equipment to set him up... and took the other two down with him!


That has to be it!
.....
First thing to do tomorrow is investigate those whom he collected debts from!
The most suspicious of the three.. is the pawn broker


Heh... I can barely walk with this gout!
Huh?
Did I go outside the day before yesterday...?
Just the day before yesterday, he took everything I had... Dammit!
He was a scummy moneylender and a greedy old coot.
He deserved to be killed.
...When I heard he was killed... I felt good
.....
there were three killed in three different locations and they were killed very skillfully
...But I guess,
I wouldn't put the murder beyond her.
With that vigor...
...Tch
Now the pawn broker seems more and more suspicious...
Oh, well.
忌中


..Don't be discouraged Cheer up!
..Well, alright then,
Hypocrite!
Basides, I've heard rumors that the only reason a young beauty like you – was wed to such a dirty old man – was because you were after his money!
Way too overdramatic!
..Come on, your crying was just overdramatic!
"..I knew it.. M-My husband was such a kind man. He would never incur anyone's enmity.."
"– They caught the perpetrator, but it was a drunken stone dealer."
It all smells fishy!!
The way she acted like they were intimate . and cried ..
The way her face looked so relieved
She smells fishy!
I'll keep an eye on her!

Hmm?
Per-fect!
I've already caught her!
.....
Hmpf, he went in through the back door
Huh?
What . do you mean?
...I'm so glad it wasn't you!
There she is!

Huh!?
But a thief-taker just came by and told me it was a stone-dealer, and I was so relieved!
I was so sure that it was you... And I was so worried...
I mean the one who killed my husband, of course!
T-That broad!
At least I know she wasn't involved in the murder...
From now on... we can see each other without worrying about anyone else...
Of course... I'm just grateful... that someone killed him...
My husband just died... and his employees will be watching...
...but you should go home today...
.....
Now, you know I don't want you going anywhere strange...
What, more money?
By the way...
Yes. It's a pity, but I'll do that

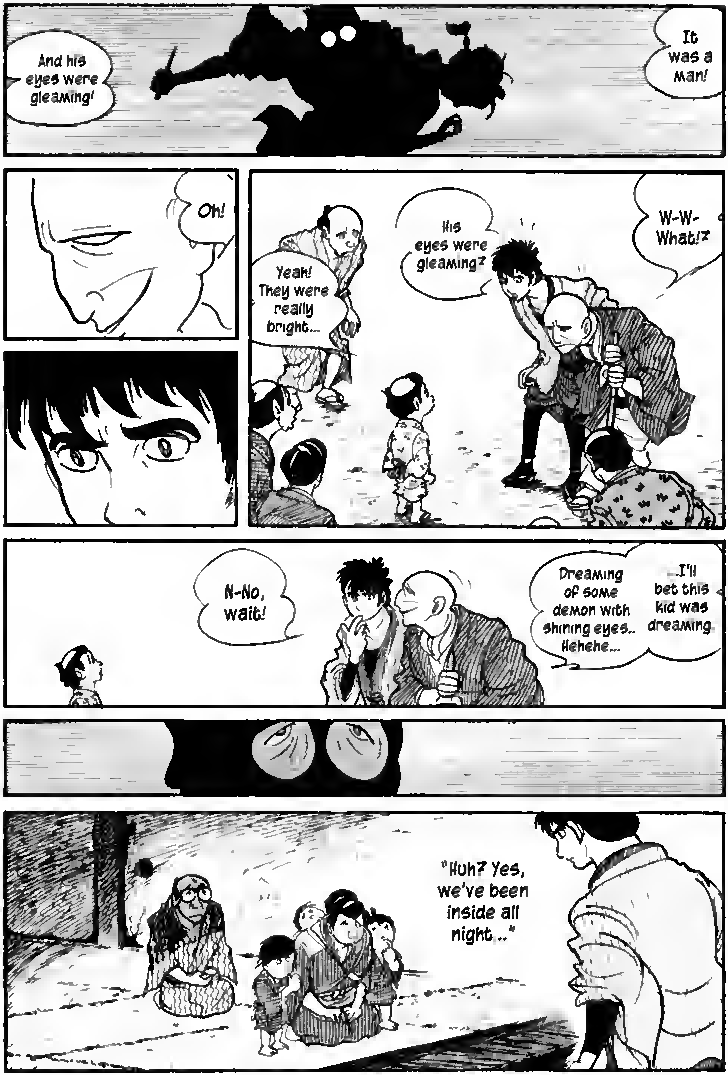
That bastard! That third-rate did it! I'm sure of it!
He was intimate with the pawn broker's wife,
so to get rid of him,
he set this up and killed him!
No doubt about it!
But... Hold it!
Before I tie him up, I should get a real good grip on his tail...

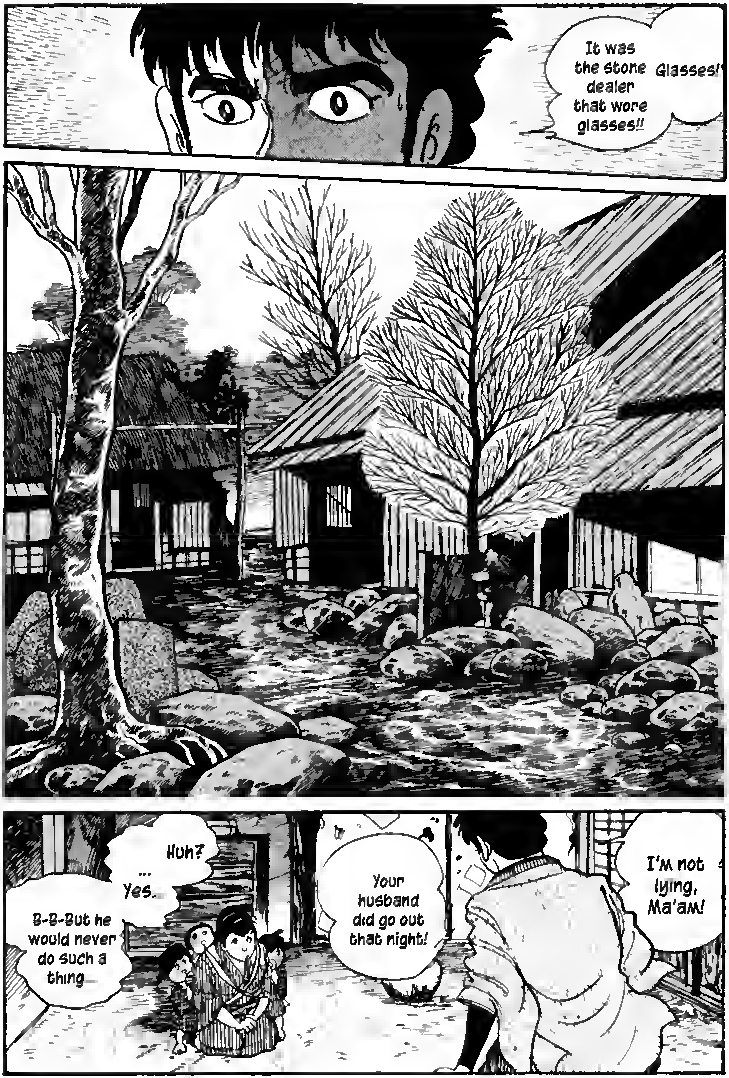
……
…Here's your money
Ehhe…
Even spending time with that horrible woman is bearable when I remember I'm doing it for you…
Oh, don't be so distant!
I'm so sorry for making you make all the money…

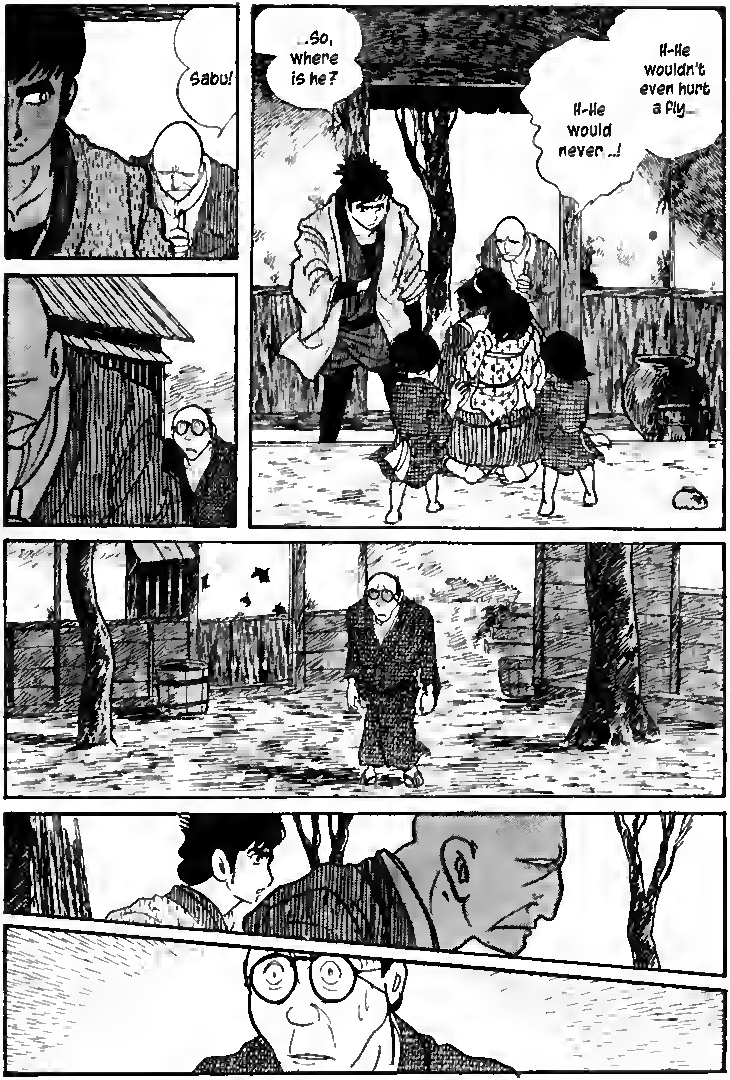
Ack!!
Huh? What was that?
Hmm?
No one's there
You think it was just a toad?
But it's winter
A stray cat, then.
It doesn't matter, as long as we're happy... Now quickly!
...Oh?
So, those two did the murders together!
They arranged it so it would be quicker to get the money from the pawn broker's wife!
And that man must've stabbed them...!!
I'm sure he could've easily taken out three people in one night!
Damn!
By the way,
I have good news!
Apparently, the woman's husband is dead!
Huh!?

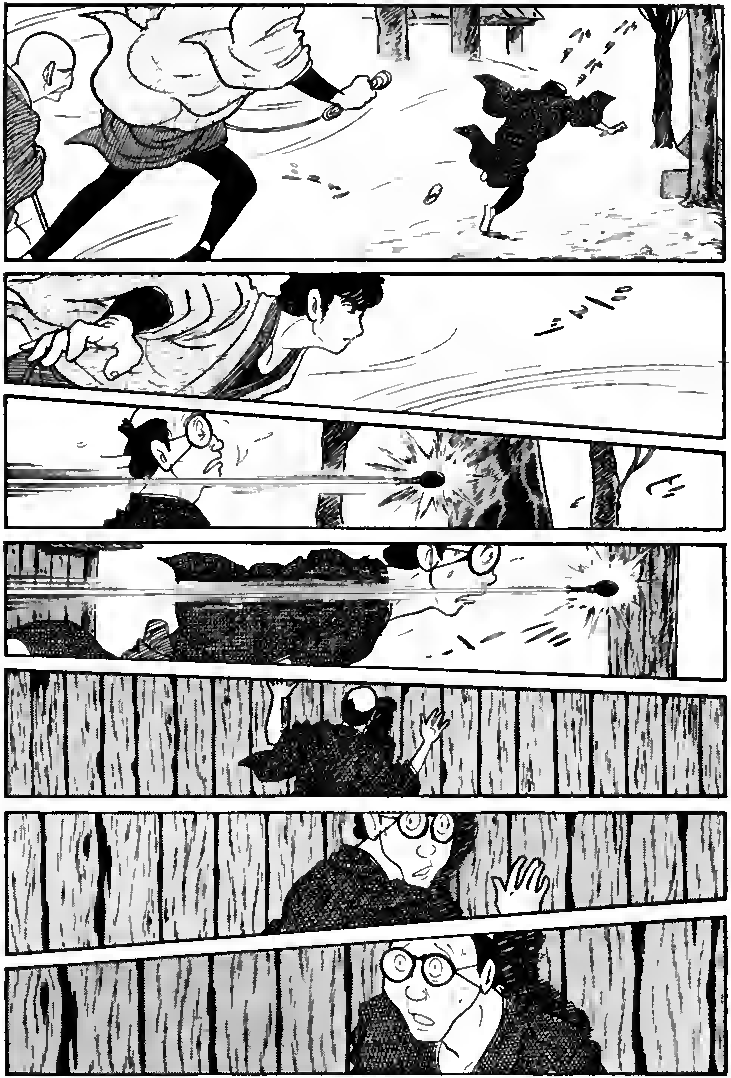
Who was it that murdered the old man?
That's pretty good..
Yes, yes..
Now I'll be able to squeeze more money out of her!
But don't you think that's real convenient for us?
She was pretty happy
Yes
And they were both street-walkers this time?

..Yeah.
So the stone dealer's tools were..?
You seem so gloomy, even though your theory that the stone dealer wasn't the murderer turned out right...!
What's wrong, Sabu?
Huh?
Huh?
Oh, nothing ..
It's just that I'm back to square one
I saw it!
I saw the woman get killed last night ..!


And his eyes were gleaming!
It was a man!
Oh!
Yeah! They were really bright...
His eyes were gleaming?
W-W-What!?
N-No, wait!
Dreaming of some demon with shining eyes.. Hehehe...
...I'll bet this kid was dreaming.
"Huh? Yes, we've been inside all night.."

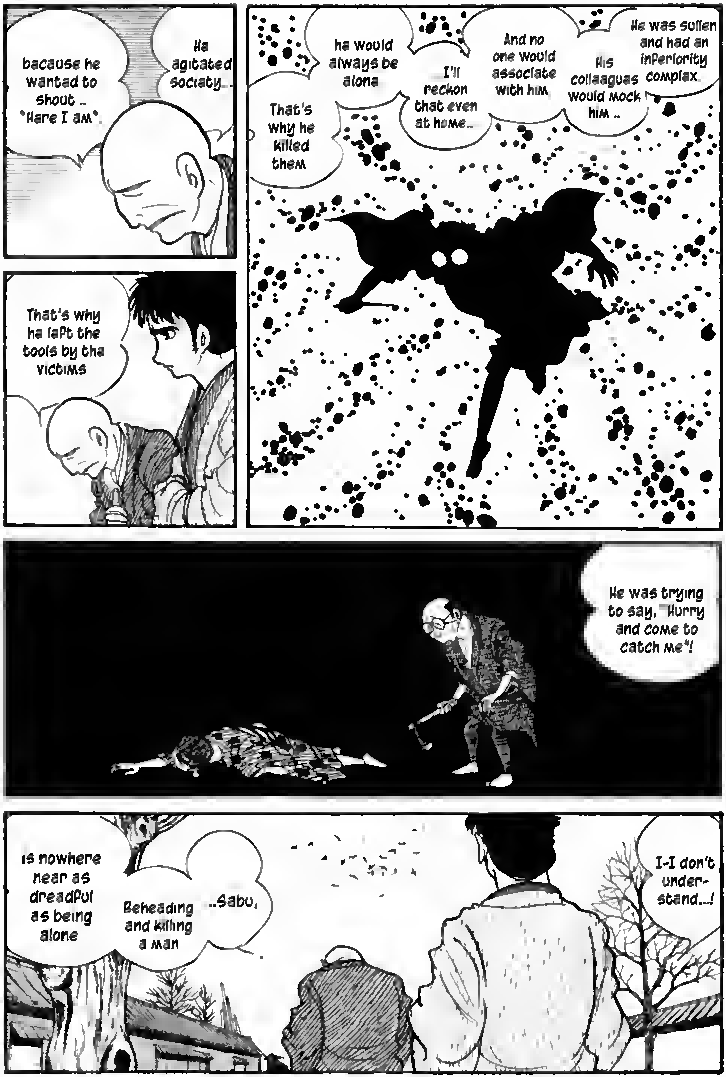

It was the stone dealer that wore glasses!!
Glasses!
Huh?
...
Yes.
B-B-But he would never do such a thing...
Your husband did go out that night!
I'm not lying, Ma'am!

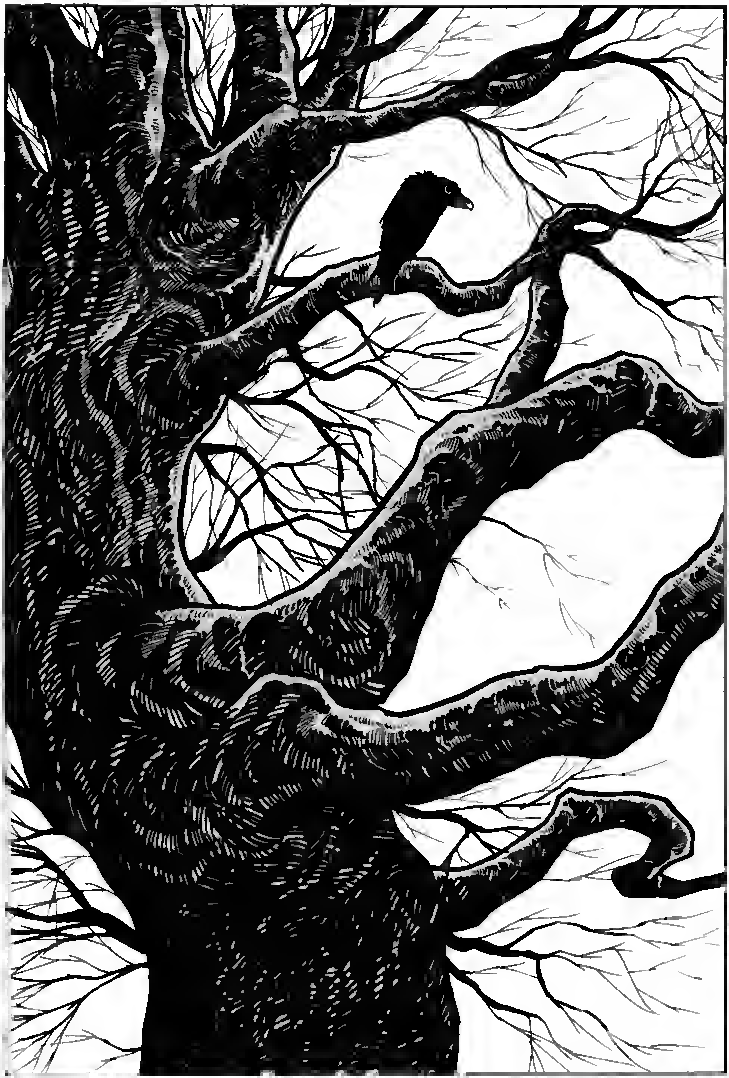

Sabu!
...So, where is he?
H-He would never ...!
H-He wouldn't even hurt a fly...



I-I-I... k-killed them!!
I-I-I... It was me!

Why... would he leave such obvious tools by the victims...!?
And why?
...The raven.
The stray raven.
...But why?
Why would such a timid... and gentle man do this!?


He agitated society...
because he wanted to shout ... "Here I am".
That's why he killed them
he would always be alone
I'll reckon that even at home...
And no one would associate with him
His colleagues would mock him ...
He was sullen and had an inferiority complex
That's why he left the tools by the victims
He was trying to say, "Hurry and come to catch me"!
I-I don't understand...!
..Sabu,
Beheading and killing a man
is nowhere near as dreadful as being alone



December 1969 "Raven" (FIN)

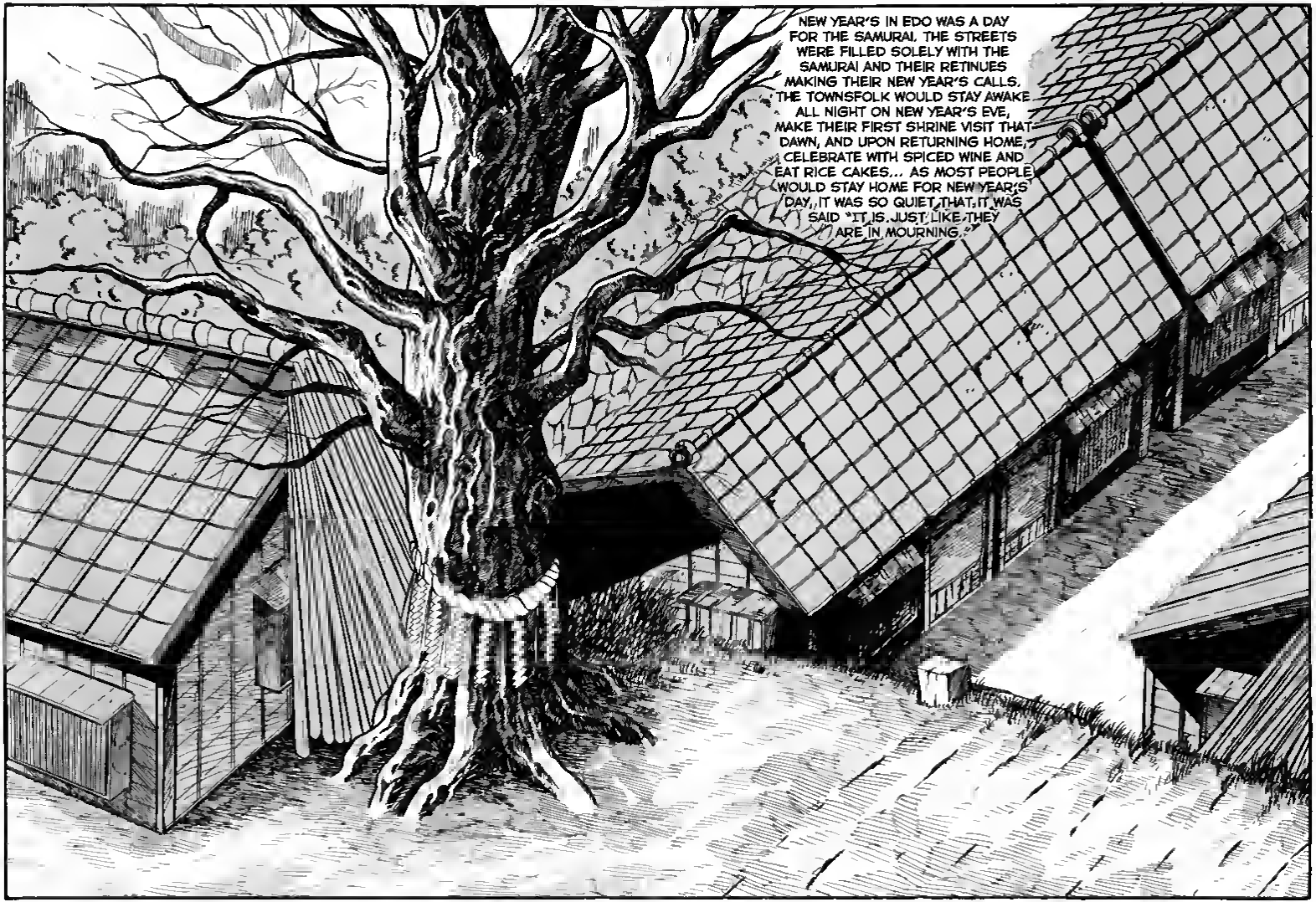
佐武と市捕物控

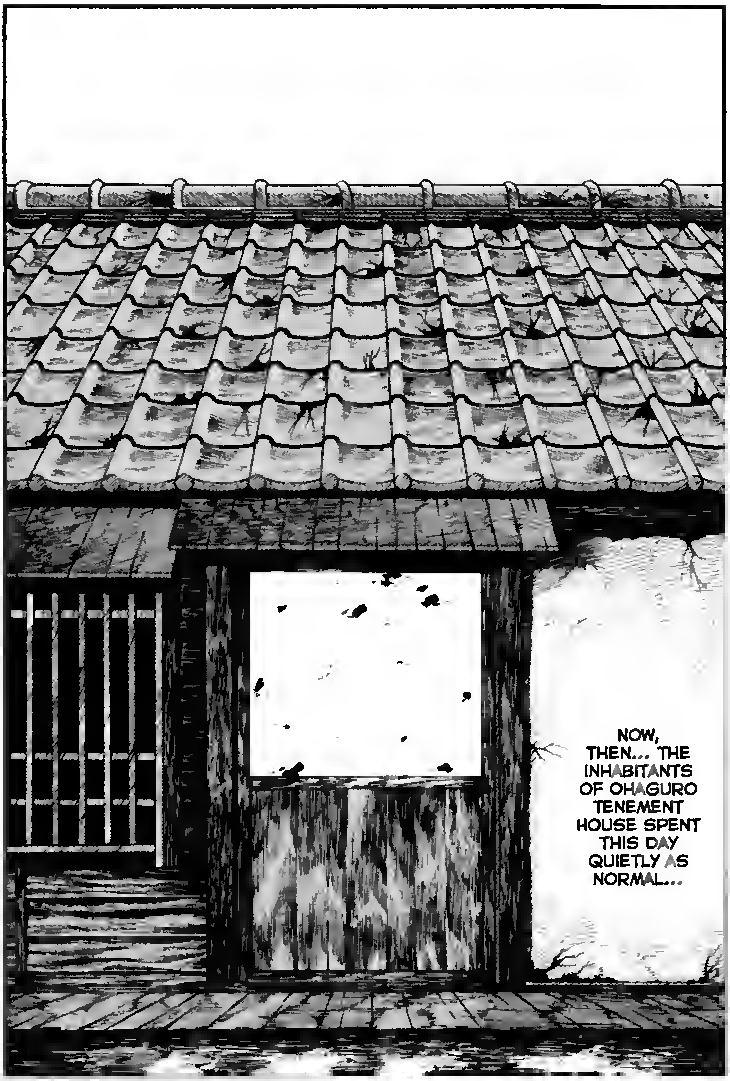
SABU & ICHI

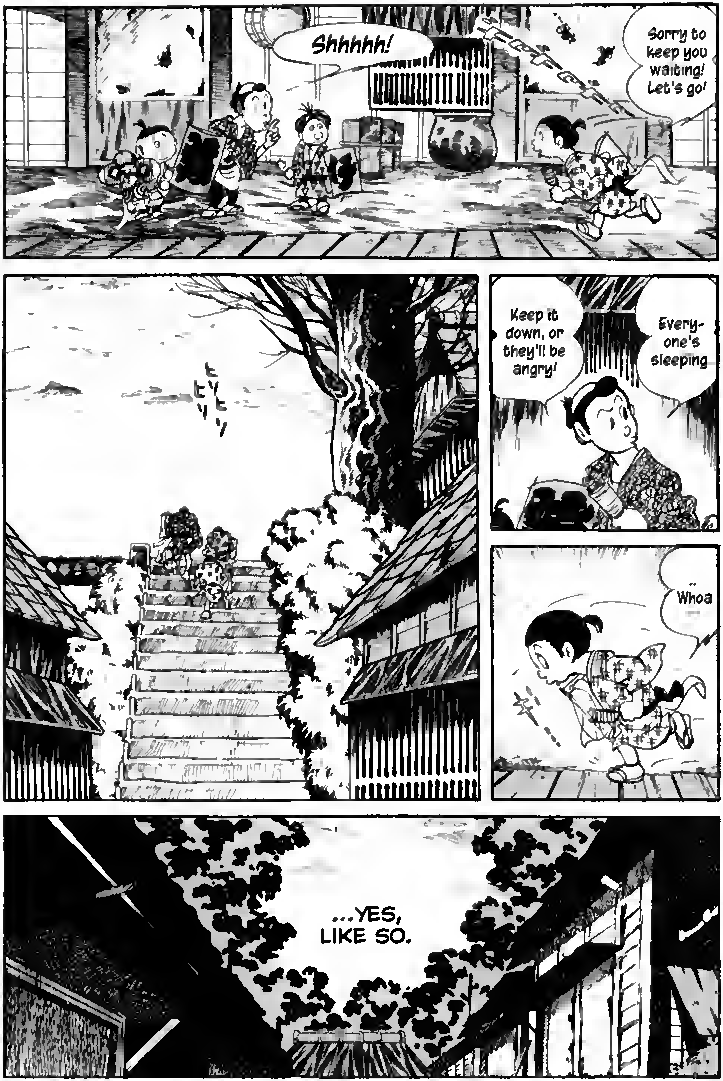
Chapter 25
presented by
Hokuto no gun
and
Happy scans

Translated by SystematicChaos
Cleaned by Wright
Typesetting by Kazuhiko

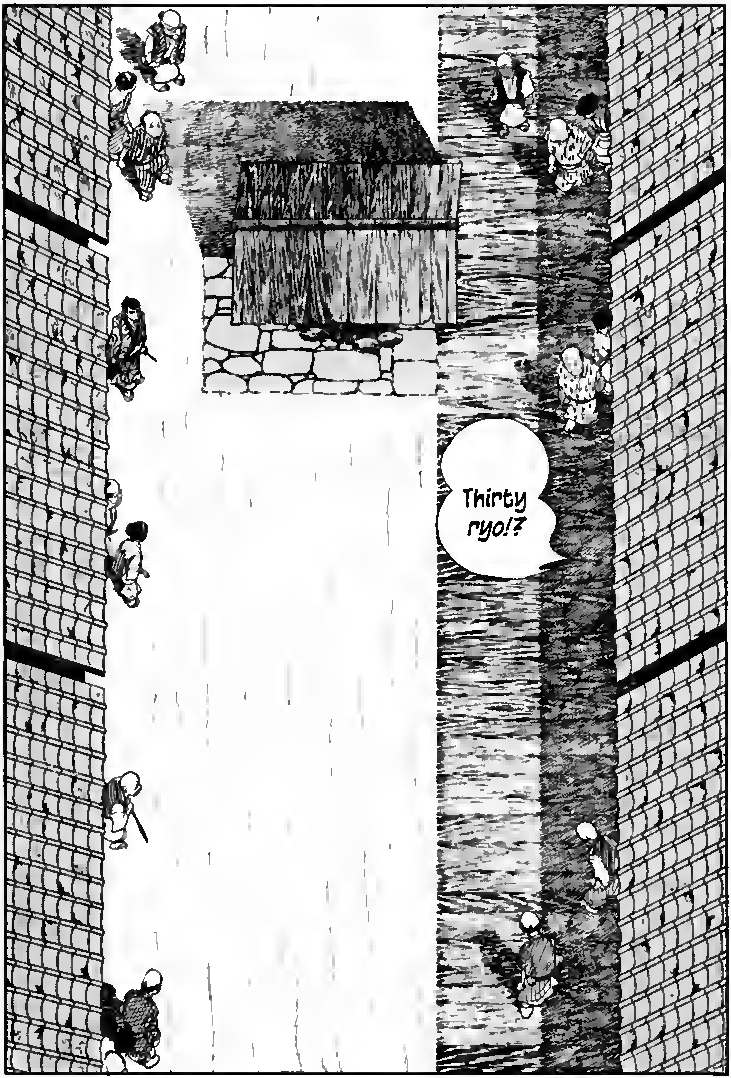
Chapter 26: Ohaguro Tenement House

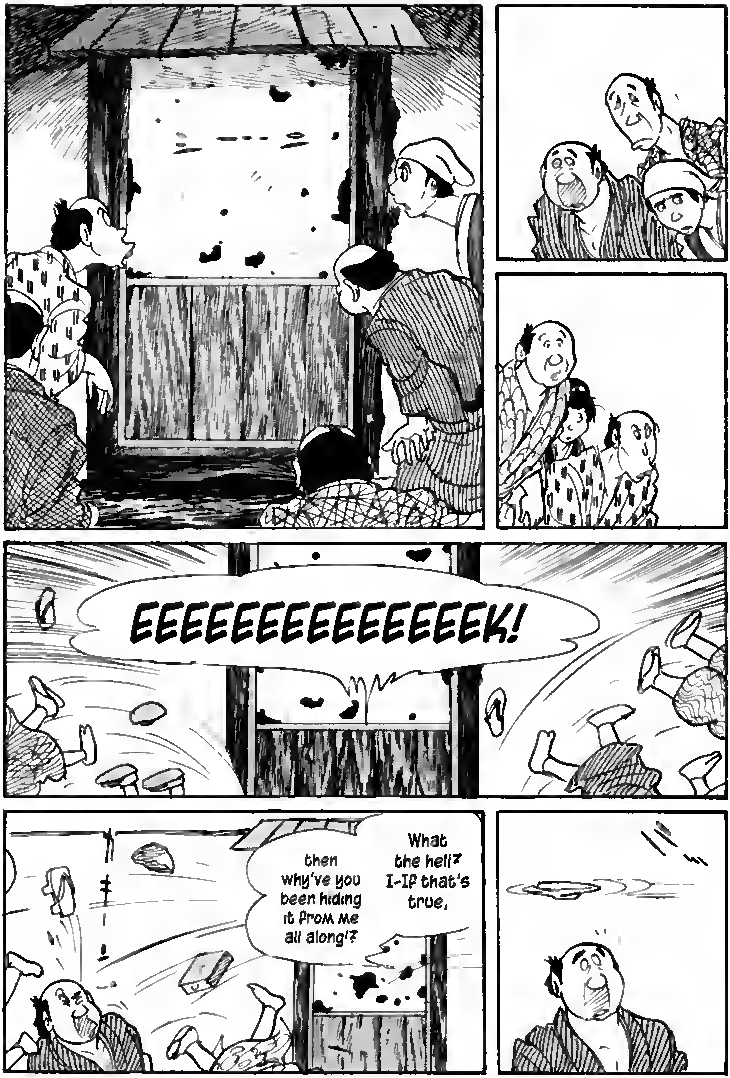

NEW YEAR'S IN EDO WAS A DAY FOR THE SAMURAI, THE STREETS WERE FILLED SOLELY WITH THE SAMURAI AND THEIR RETINUES MAKING THEIR NEW YEAR'S CALLS. THE TOWNSFOLK WOULD STAY AWAKE ALL NIGHT ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, MAKE THEIR FIRST SHRINE VISIT THAT DAWN, AND UPON RETURNING HOME, CELEBRATE WITH SPICED WINE AND EAT RICE CAKES... AS MOST PEOPLE WOULD STAY HOME FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY, IT WAS SO QUIET THAT IT WAS SAID "IT IS JUST LIKE THEY ARE IN MOURNING."


NOW, THEN... THE INHABITANTS OF OHAGURO TENEMENT HOUSE SPENT THIS DAY QUIETLY AS NORMAL...


Shhhhh!
Sorry to keep you waiting! Let's go!
Keep it down, or they'll be angry!
Everyone's sleeping.
Whoa
...YES, LIKE SO.

IN FACT, IT WAS SO SILENT...
T-T-T-Thief!!
M-Money! Thirty ryo!!
W-What's going on?
What's gone?
I've been robbed!
I-It's been stolen!
It's gone, it's gone!
Aieee! It's gone!


Thirty ryo!?

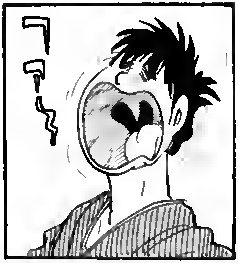

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEK!
What the hell? I-If that's true,
then why've you been hiding it from me all along!?

Hey!
Hey, hey, hey! Keep it down!
I-I wasn't hiding it from you!
I-I-I-I was thinking of telling you sooner or later...
Mm-mgh...
You woke us up!
Don't you know it's New Year's!
Yell, yell, yell!
The hell's your problem?
S-Sorry... I-It's nothing...
P-Please, head back home...
What the hell?
You say it's nothing...
Well? Fortune-teller?
But didn't you say someone stole thirty ryo?

But even if it was three ryo or three bu.. We can't just overlook you saying it was stolen!
It's almost like you're trying to make one of us out to be the thief!
Right, guys!?
.....
Heh...
Well, I just can't believe ..
that you'd ever have thirty ryo!
Hey.
Why don't you...
tell us some more, okay?
I-I was dream-ing!
I-I had thirty ryo stolen from me .. That was my first dream this year!
Hmmm !?
It wasn't true!
I... It's not true...

Eek!!
So... if someone were to find it and pick it up.. it wouldn't be yours, would it!?
So the thirty ryo isn't real
...Oh, well
I know fortune-tellers are supposed to see the future, but come on...
But the first dream's usually tomorrow night...
The hell!?
Whoa.. whoa
M-Mr. Hachi, did you... find it!?
that you really had thirty ryo stolen from you!?
I guess that means..
...I said if!

He wants you to come to the tenement house.
Ichi's coming over.
Can't you at least let me sleep in on New Year's!?
Tch.



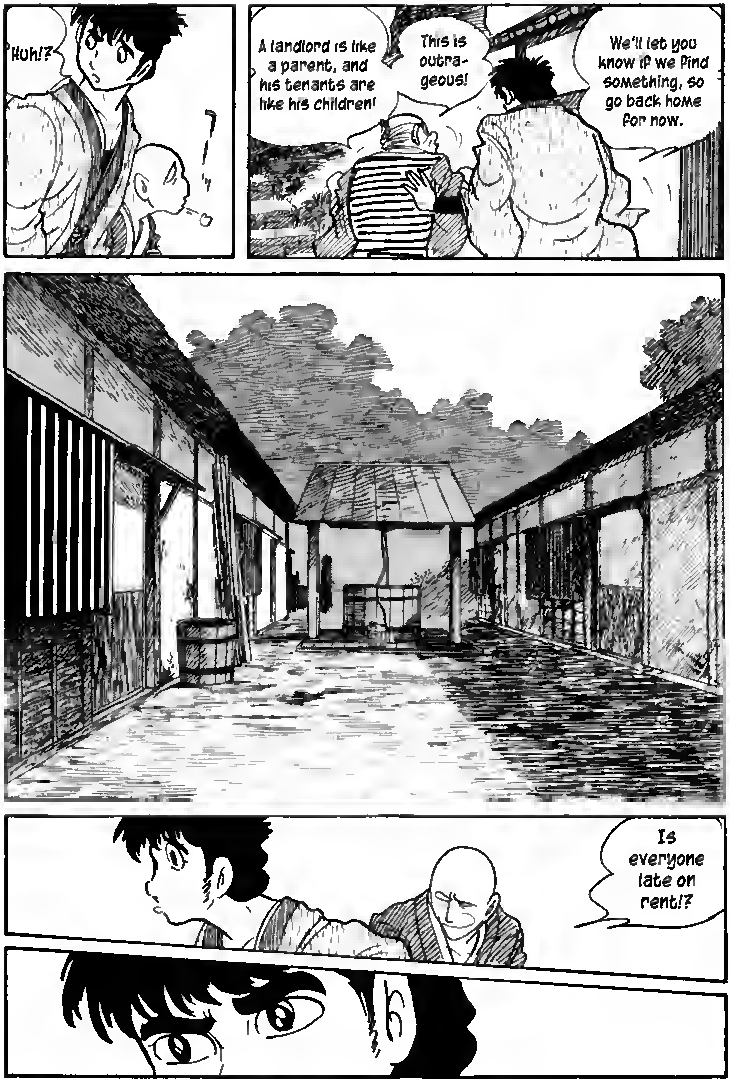
I guess that's your mouth saying Happy New Year!

Sorry to do this to you on New Year's, but there's something I need your opinion on.
That's right, Sabu.

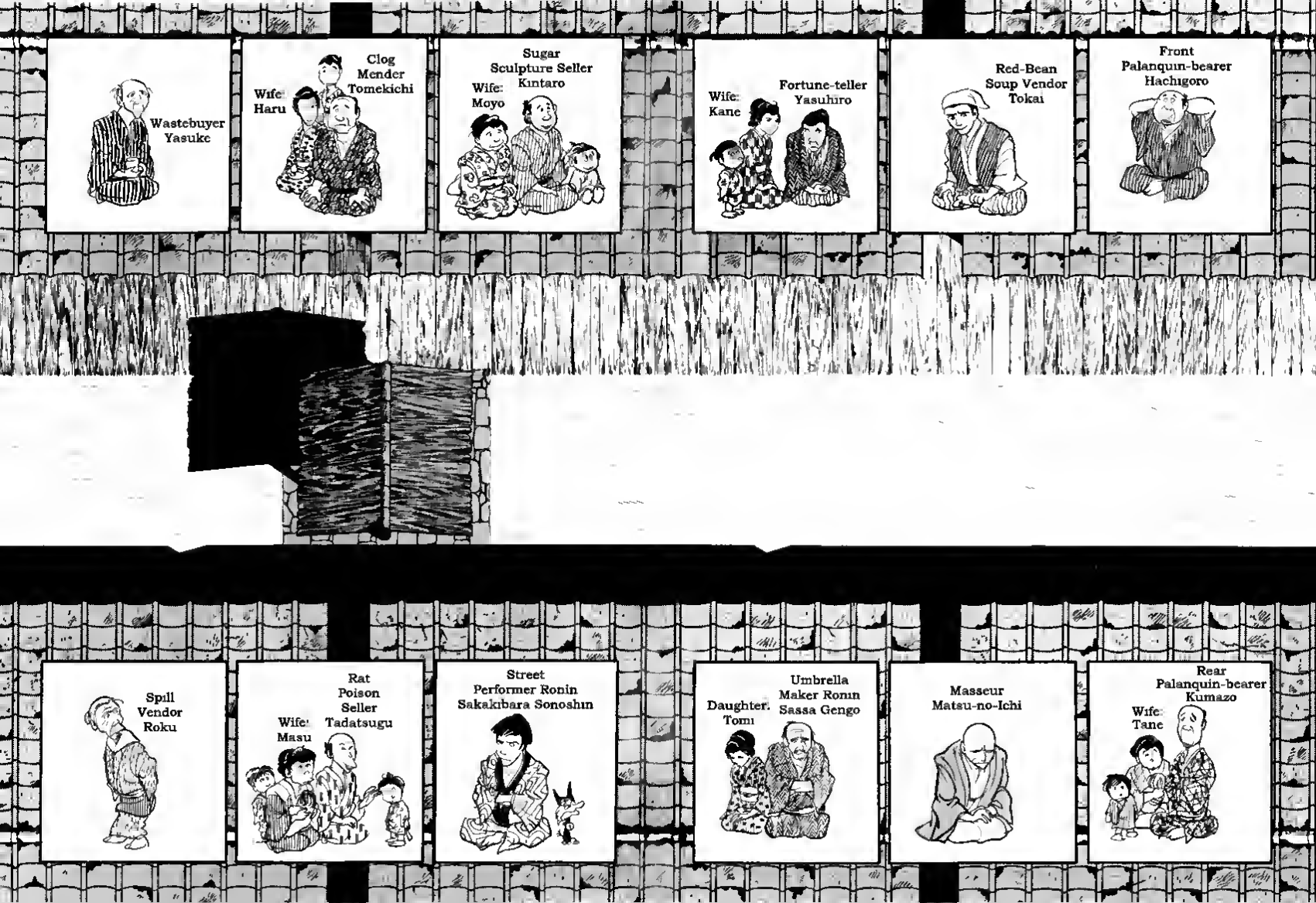
WELL, NOW THIS HAS BECOME AN EXTRAORDINARY NEW YEAR'S...
Sabu, you got any ideas?
Hmm...

It's New Year's, remember?
Hehehe... Don't get so mad.
Huh?
I can't track him like this!
That's just too slipshod!
Yes! You gotta be as carefree as if you were solving a New Year's riddle...
So we gotta put on a cheery smile!?
No one leaves the tenement house until we find the thirty ryo!
We need to confine everyone until this is over!
Anyway!
Alright, everyone to their own house!
Mutter mutter..
Mutter mutter...

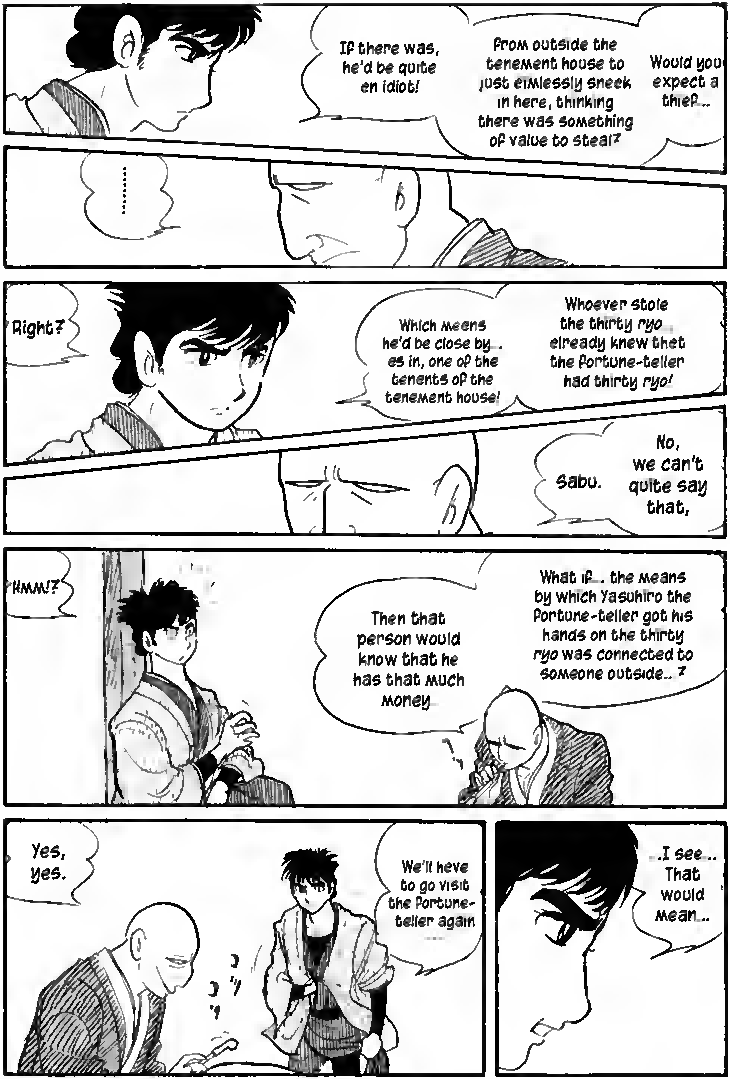
I bet that's more money than they've ever seen.
They all just care about the thirty ryo!
Hehe
Damn! No one's going home!
What's this about thirty ryo!?
Urrrgh!
So, what'll you do..? Hehehe...
So, they're all standing around to watch your skills in action.
It's not there anymore... So let's put the talk of rent aside from now...
Now, now, Mr. Landlord
Whoa whoa...
If you have that kinda money, I need you to pay your rent from the past year!
But it's even harder to believe that there's a thief in this tenement house!
I...I find it hard to believe there ever was thirty ryo...
What? A thief!?
said that anyone in your tenement house was a thief
No one...


Huh!?
A landlord is like a parent, and his tenants are like his children!
This is outrageous!
We'll let you know if we find something, so go back home for now.
Is everyone late on rent!?

Alright... Let's think this over from the beginning!
For whatever reason, the fortune-teller Saito Yasuhiro had thirty ryo
And he was sure he had it last night
But when he looked at its hiding place just earlier...!
T-The thirty ryo . I had been saving it up bit by bit over the years ..
Tohoho
I don't believe it!
He can't have deceived me for three years!
Lies!
I can't imagine how you could save up thirty ryo by jingling and jangling bamboo sticks and counting the lines on peoples' palms or hairs in their nose
But judging by his despondence... I don't think it was an outright lie.
There must be some explanation behind it
...Right . That thirty ryo does seem suspicious.

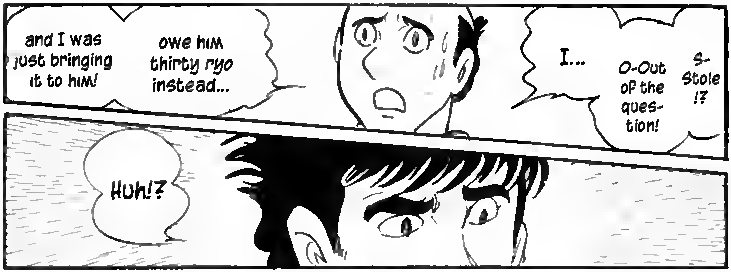

Wastebuyer
Yasuke
Clog
Mender
Tomekichi
Wife:
Haru
Sugar
Sculpture Seller
Kintaro
Wife:
Moyo
Fortune-teller
Yasuhiro
Wife:
Kane
Red-Bean
Soup Vendor
Tokai
Front
Palanquin-bearer
Hachigoro
Spill
Vendor
Roku
Rat
Poison
Seller
Tadatsugu
Wife:
Masu
Street
Performer Ronin
Sakakibara Sonoshin
Umbrella
Maker Ronin
Sassa Gengo
Daughter:
Tomi
Masseur
Matsu-no-Ichi
Rear
Palanquin-bearer
Kumazo
Wife:
Tane

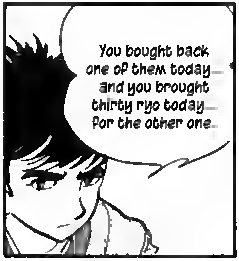
That's why... all of them seem suspicious to me...
No one has any money... they're all in want of money.
If there were a coin lying around, they'd all try and pocket it.
And I didn't find a single coin. Much less thirty ryo.
...I've checked every nook and cranny of the tenement house...
So if you weren't suspicious, none of them would be suspicious... Hehhehhe...
.....
you're one of them, too!
...And let me just make this clear, Ichi,
I'm thinking seriously here!
Don't make fun of me!
Huh!?
Still, Ichi!
They may not have money... but they're all kind-hearted folk.
don't want to suspect the other folks in the tenement house.
I just...
Hehe... but you see, Sabu,

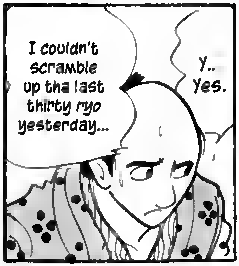

If there was, he'd be quite an idiot!
From outside the tenement house to just aimlessly sneak in here, thinking there was something of value to steal?
Would you expect a thief...
.....
Right?
Which means he'd be close by... as in, one of the tenents of the tenement house!
Whoever stole the thirty ryo already knew that the Fortune-teller had thirty ryo!
Sabu.
No, we can't quite say that,
Hmm?
Then that person would know that he has that much money
What if... the means by which Yasuhiro the Fortune-teller got his hands on the thirty ryo was connected to someone outside...?
Yes, yes.
We'll have to go visit the Fortune-teller again
...I see... That would mean...

HMM?
What is it?
Shh!
Wait right here, Ichi!
He looks suspicious!

Hey, you! Hold it right there!
Hey, hold it!
Why are you running !?
Why were you looking into the tenement house!?
Urk!
I-I wasn't ..
Huh?
That bastard!
I...I just
had some business with the Fortune-teller in that tenement house..
The Fortune-teller!?
So you're the one who stole the thirty ryo...!
I should've known!


and I was just bringing it to him!
owe him thirty ryo instead...
I...
O-Out of the ques-tion!
S-Stole!?
Huh!?


You bought back one of them today... and you brought thirty ryo today... for the other one.

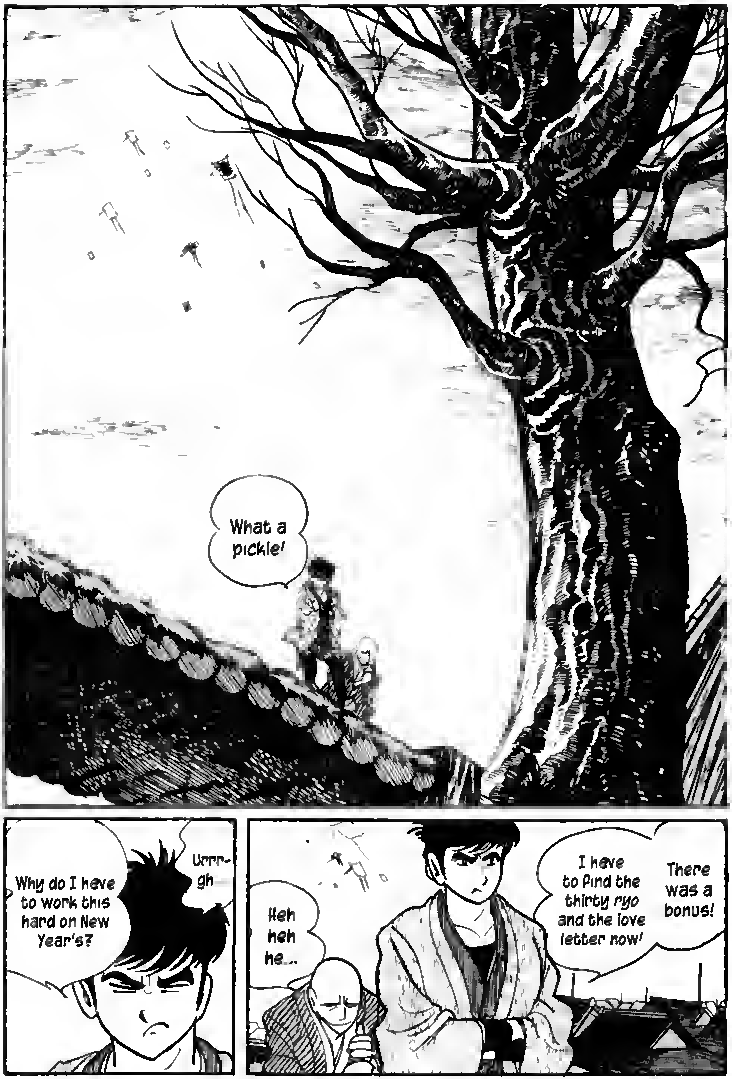

I couldn't scramble up the last thirty ryo yesterday...
y.. Yes.

So you black-mailed him... to give you thirty ryo for each one!
and I just succumbed to temptation...!
I happened upon two love letters... that he had dropped...
T-The other day...
..M-My deepest apolo-gies!

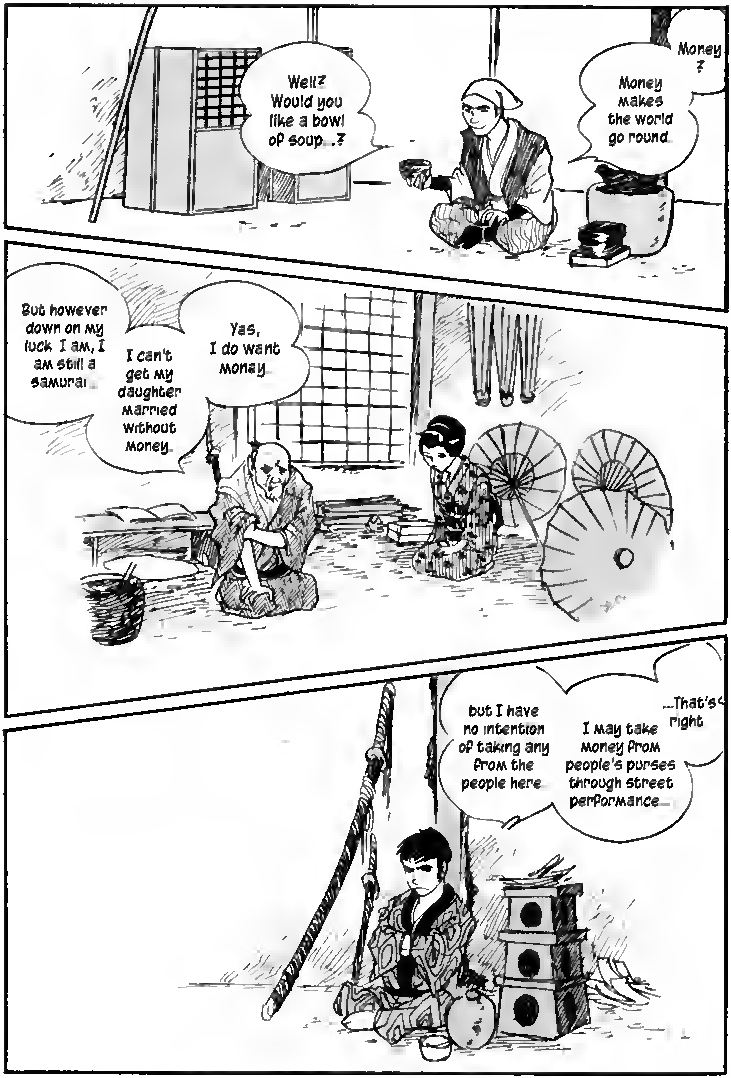
is the exact same money as the thirty ryo you paid yesterday.. is it?
I don't suppose that the thirty ryo you made..
But you did now!

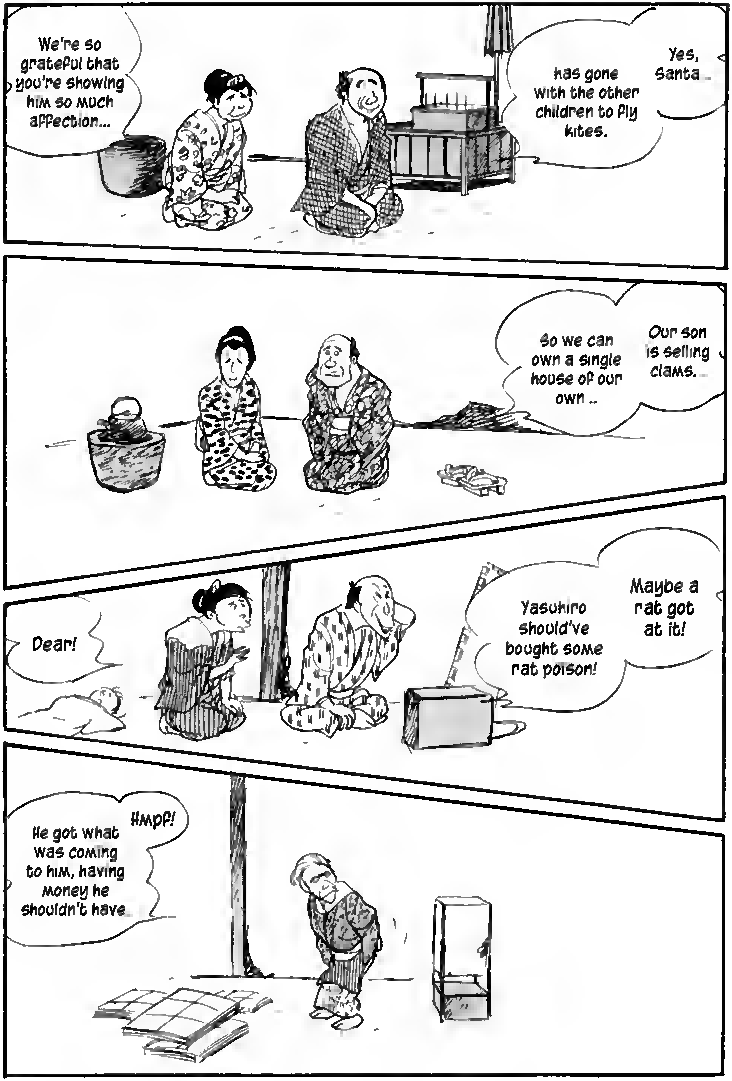
If you have any doubts, ask that person...
I-I borrowed this from another person...
O-Of course not!

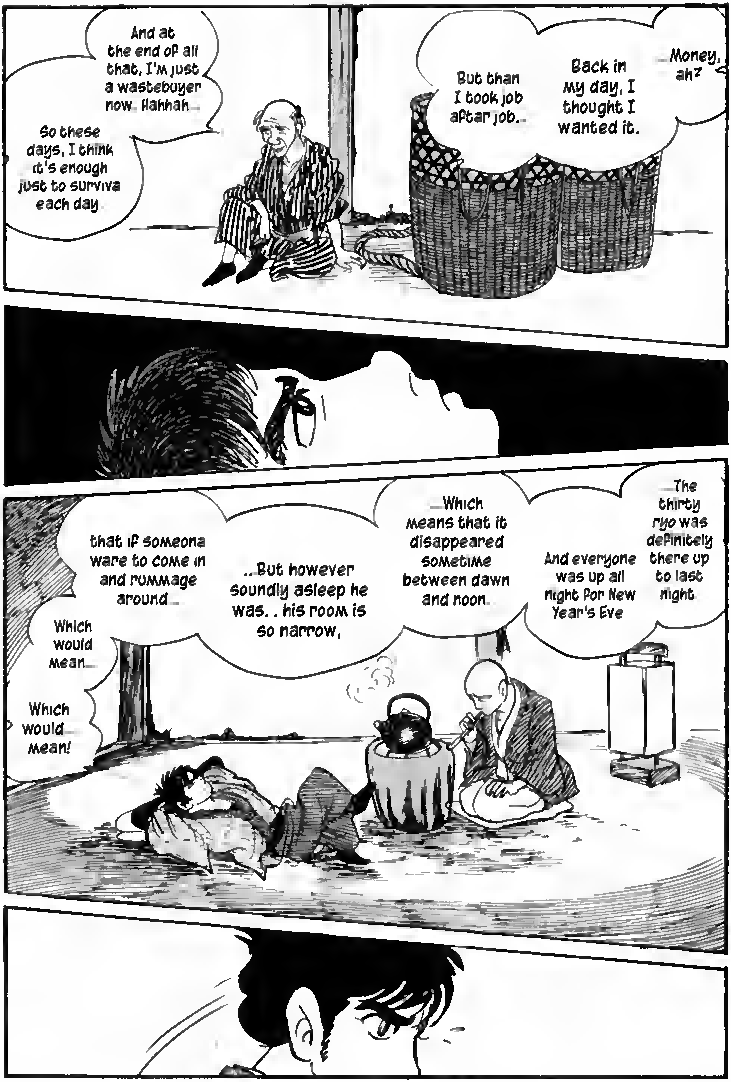
the wife of a certain merchant, who wrote me those love letters...
That person was actually...
W... Well, you see...
What was that person's name?
I-If her husband were to find out about this...!
So thirty ryo would be a cheap price to pay...!
I see!
I would love to... but it vanished along with the money!!
W-Well, you see...
S-So please, give me back the other letter!
H-Hey, listen, I have the thirty ryo here, you see?


What a pickle!
Why do I have to work this hard on New Year's?
Urrr~ gh
Heh heh he...
I have to find the thirty ryo and the love letter now!
There was a bonus!

But what if you don't find the money or the love letter..!?
Tch!
If this keeps up, it's gonna be a long year!
It's cause you're a hard-working thief-taker!
Why doesn't he just divine its location himself!?
Heh...
If he really lost his money,
Right, Sabu?
We palanquin-bearers would never even see that kind of money, even if we ran all our lives!
Thirty ryo?

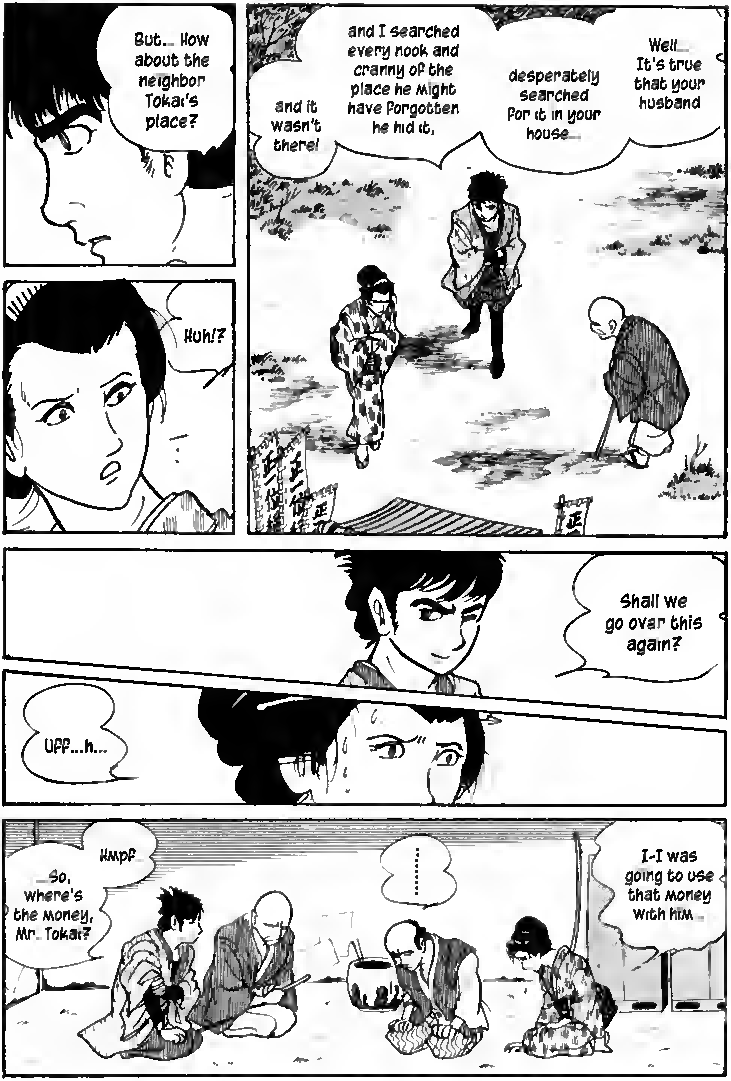

Well? Would you like a bowl of soup...?
Money?
Money makes the world go round.
Yes, I do want money.
I can't get my daughter married without money.
But however down on my luck I am, I am still a samurai.
...That's right.
I may take money from people's purses through street performance...
but I have no intention of taking any from the people here.


We're so grateful that you're showing him so much affection...
Yes, Santa... has gone with the other children to fly kites.
So we can own a single house of our own...
Our son is selling clams...
Dear!
Yasuhiro should've bought some rat poison!
Maybe a rat got at it!
Hmpf! He got what was coming to him, having money he shouldn't have...


Money, ah?
Back in my day, I thought I wanted it.
But than I took job after job...
And at the end of all that, I'm just a wastebuyer now. Hahhah...
So these days, I think it's enough just to survive each day.
The thirty ryo was definitely there up to last night.
And everyone was up all night for New Year's Eve
Which means that it disappeared sometime between dawn and noon.
...But however soundly asleep he was... his room is so narrow,
that if someone were to come in and rummage around...
Which would mean...
Which would mean!

人相
善悪当
P-Please, let it go!
I'm apologizing, aren't I?
I didn't know anything...
This is so frustrating!
I didn't know anything...!
Wasn't she a little bit too insistent!?
If you've caught on to that... Sabu,
Hehhe...
Would you like to hear the gossip of the wives of the tenement house?
The ronin Sakakibara...

...And the Fortune-teller's wife Kane and the red bean soup vendor Tokai... are intimate with each other!
And Tomi's not completely against it, either.
Is thinking of making Sassa's daughter Tomi his bride, if he can...
Hehhe...
H-How many times do I have to tell you!?
...Did you really not know about the thirty ryo?


But... How about the neighbor Tokai's place?
Huh!?
Well... It's true that your husband desperately searched for it in your house...
and I searched every nook and cranny of the place he might have forgotten he hid it,
and it wasn't there!
Shall we go over this again?
UFF...h...
Hmpf
So, where's the money, Mr. Tokai?
I-I was going to use that money with him...

In this red-bean soup pot..
I couldn't find it in my earlier search..
I'm sorry It's actually in here..
Man, oh, man
Now all that's left... is the love letter..
I-I really don't know anything about that, honestly!
What's the matter, My boyz
I
I
I

Hey, kid, tell me...
Did that kite have writing on it?
The kite... you just made!?
The kite I just made... got stuck in a tree!
Yes.
It did, but... why do you wanna know?
Well, that's another happy ending
...or is it?

January 1970: "Ohaguro Tenement House" (FIN)

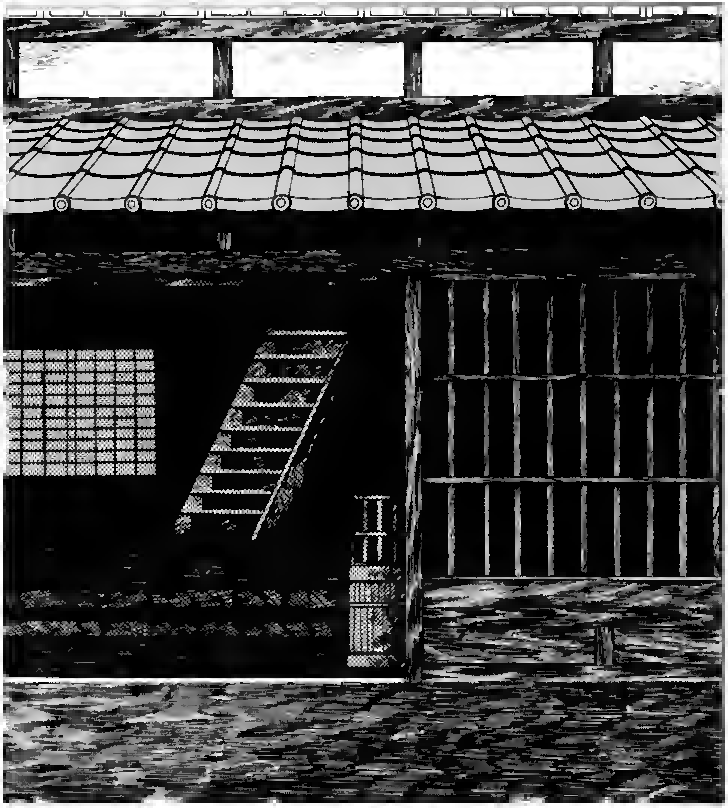
佐武と市捕物控

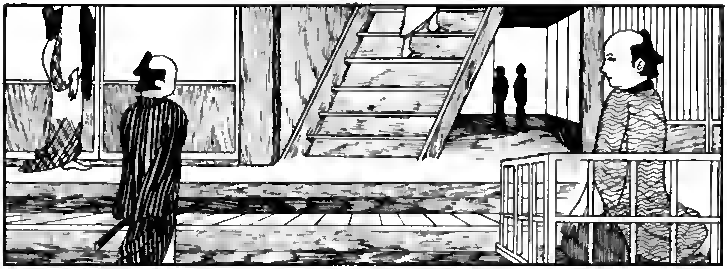
SABU & ICHI

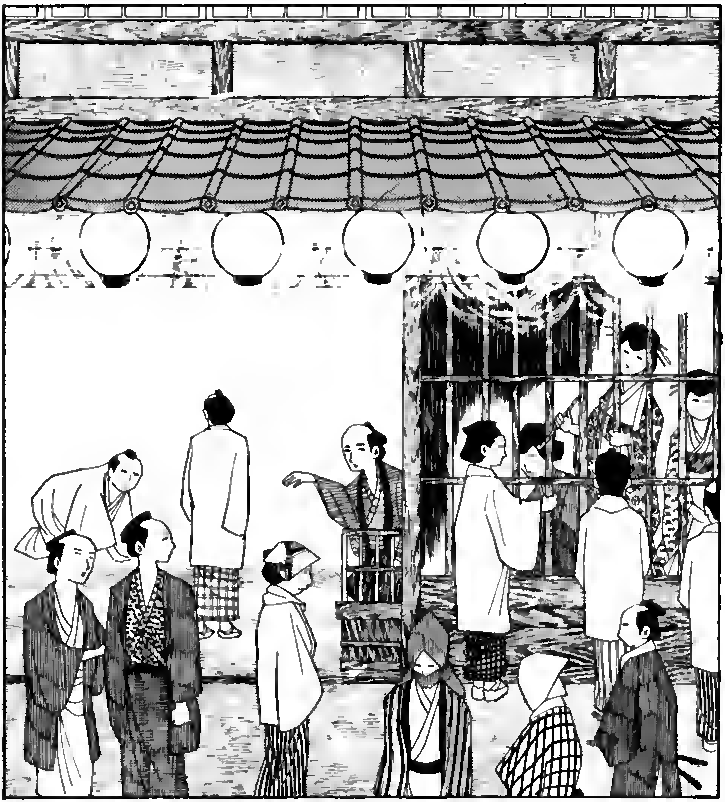
Chapter 26
presented by
Hokuto no gun
and
Happy scans

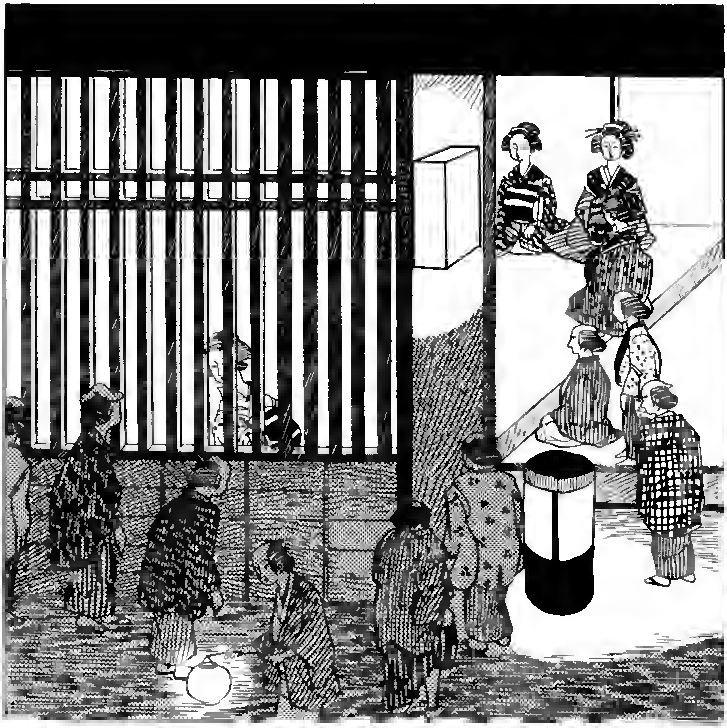
Translated by SystematicChaos
Cleaned by Wright
Typesetting by Kazuhiko

Chapter 27: The Burst Drum

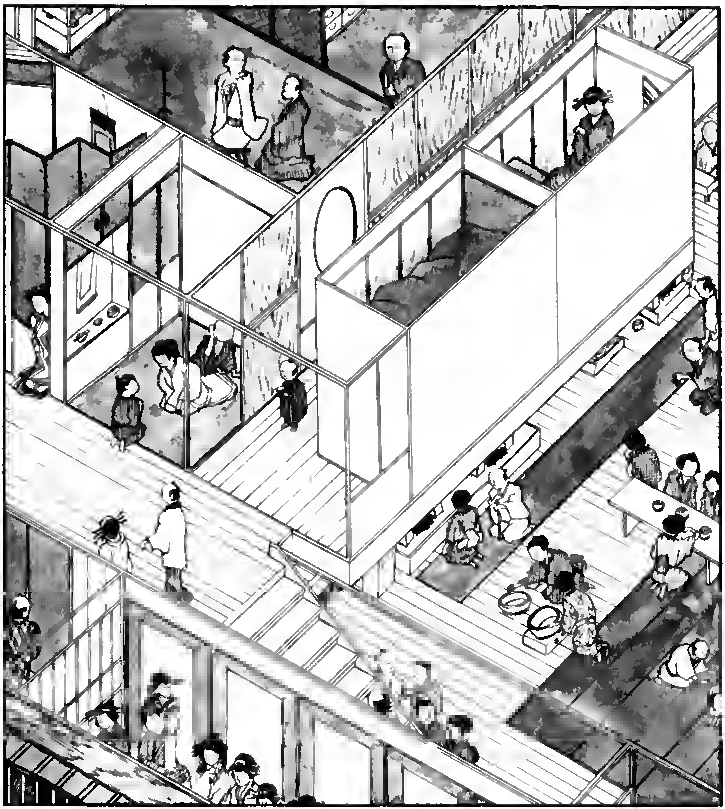


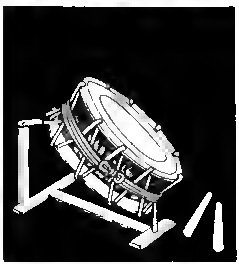






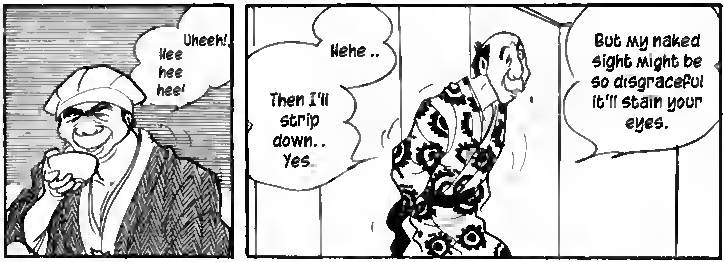
Mmm
Heeheehee
...
Hey...

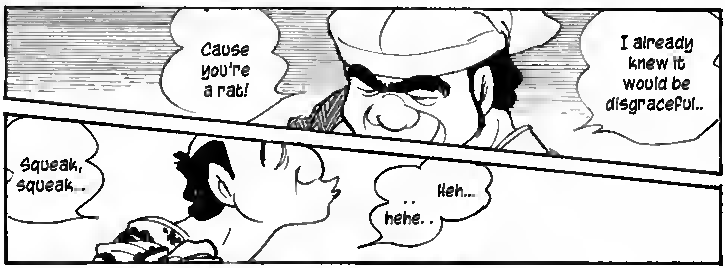




Do a naked jig for me...
That's enough! Stop that act, it's boring!
Uhhh
.. What is it... Master?
Rat!
Hey, Tada!
Y-
Yes?
Master, don't you think you've had a little too much to drink tonight?
Heh
Hehehe
What was that!?
I don't mind stripping if you insist... but. .
Huh?
No...
that you don't wanna strip down?
Or are you sayin'
If I did, that's my business!

I never heard of anythin' as brazen as a jester defying his master
Get buck naked!
Now strip!
Damn right I do!
Alright then...
Quite right...
Yes!
Y-


Uheeh! Hee hee hee!
Hehe..
Then I'll strip down.. Yes..
But my naked sight might be so disgraceful it'll stain your eyes.


Cause you're a rat!
I already knew it would be disgraceful..
Squeak, squeak...
Heh... hehe..

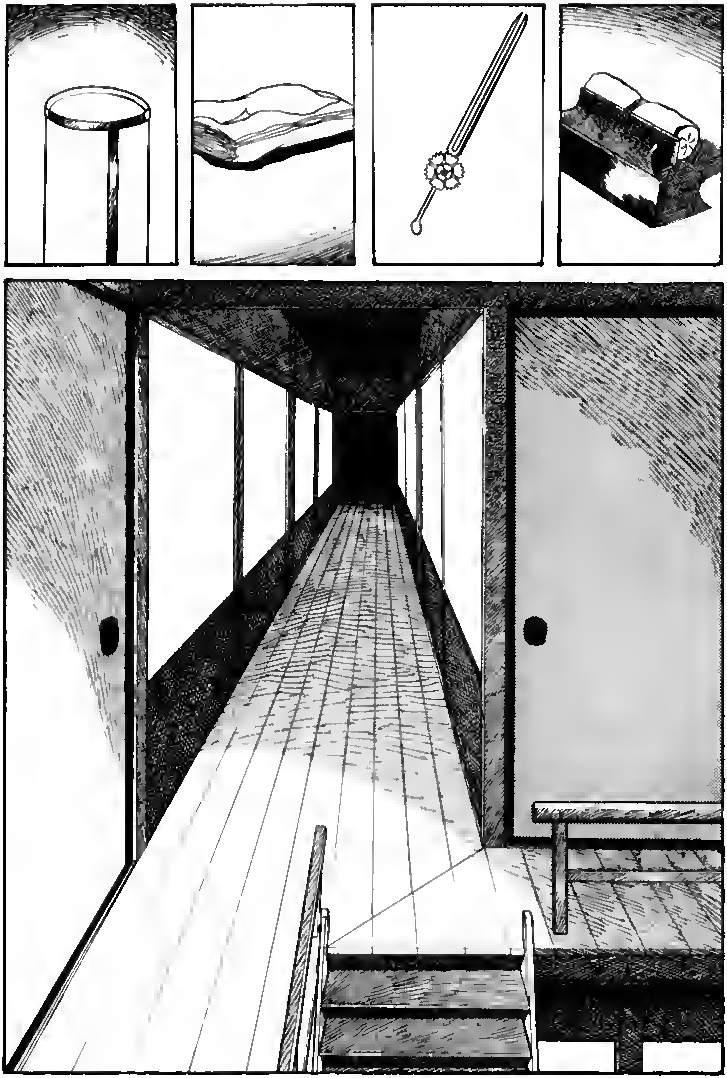
Six, eight, ten...

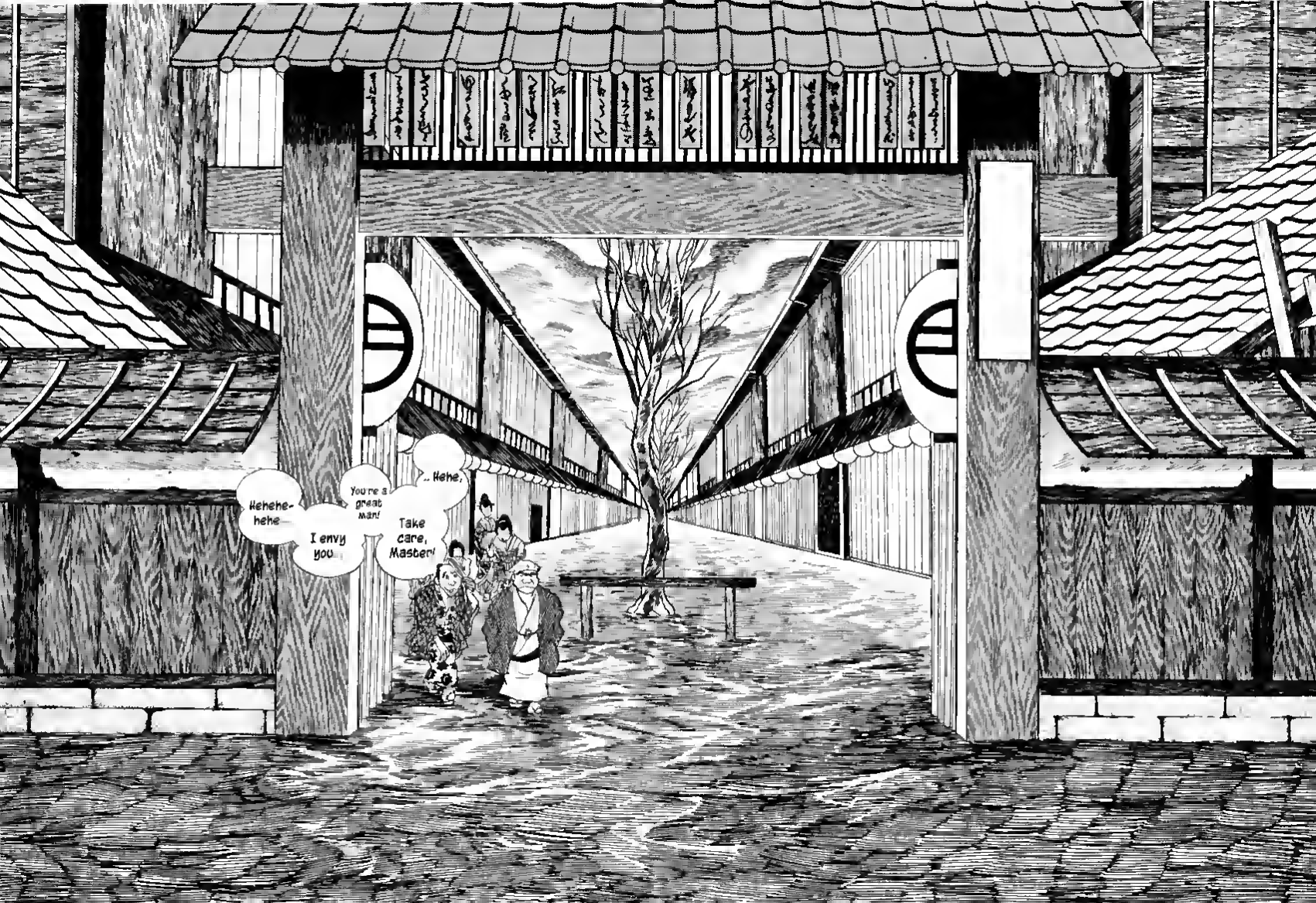
Fhyahya-hyahya!
Hya... Hyahaha!
Heh.. hehehe
Don't go teasin' me With that Pan... Dance! Dance!
Hey there, Tada!
Beat the drum!
Strike up the shamisen!
Hey, musicians!
IF I... see that jester naked...
Whaddya want Yukichiyo?
HUH?
...Hold it, Sir A...

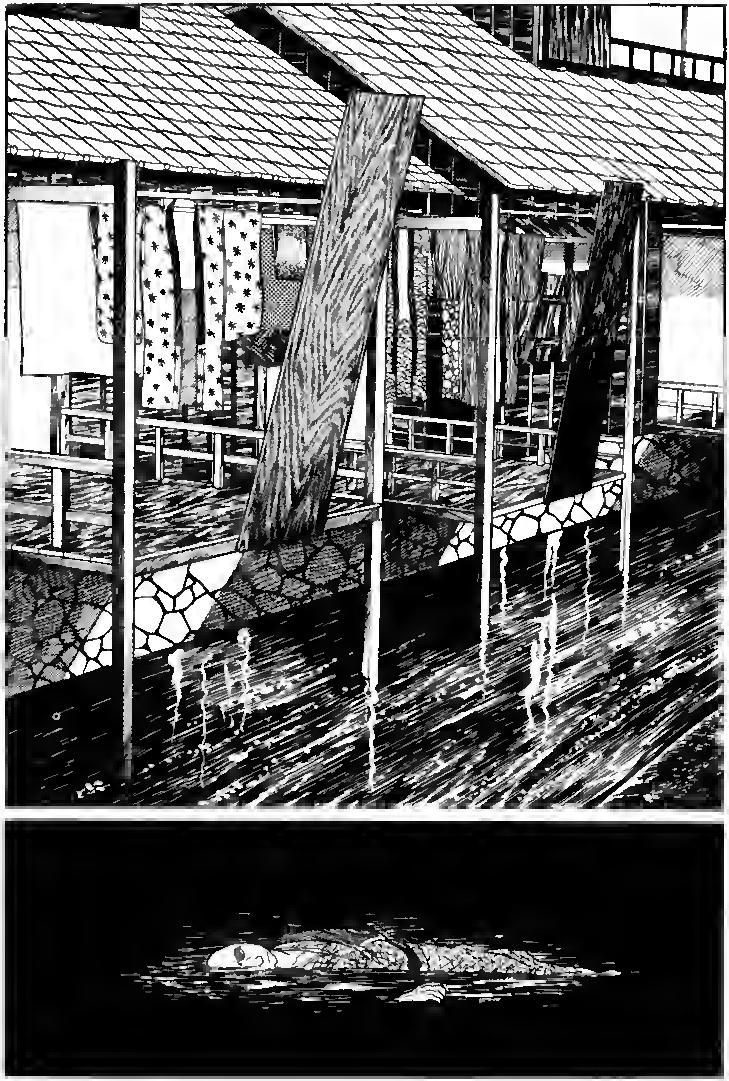
We'll end the party for now!
That's enough. Stop the naked dance.
Quit it!
Fhyooh!
Hehe... hehe... Oh really?
I'll feel so cold... that I'll want your body... to warm me up!
.....
Who said you could leave?
Hold it!
...You're staying here!
You're so amazing!
Later, big guy!
Heh... hehe, well then, Master, I'll take my leave...
ﾐﾔﾝ

You're gonna sleep in the closet in our bedroom!
There's no telling when I might need you!
That won't do me any good, Pool!
Alright, then I suppose I'll take the room next to yours...
Heh... hehe...
...Sir A...
I bought ya .. at a high price!
I hope you ain't sayin'... that you're gonna refuse to follow my commands!
It may be too good for me .. but I will go ahead and sleep in your closet...
As long as it's no bother to you.
Heh... hehe...

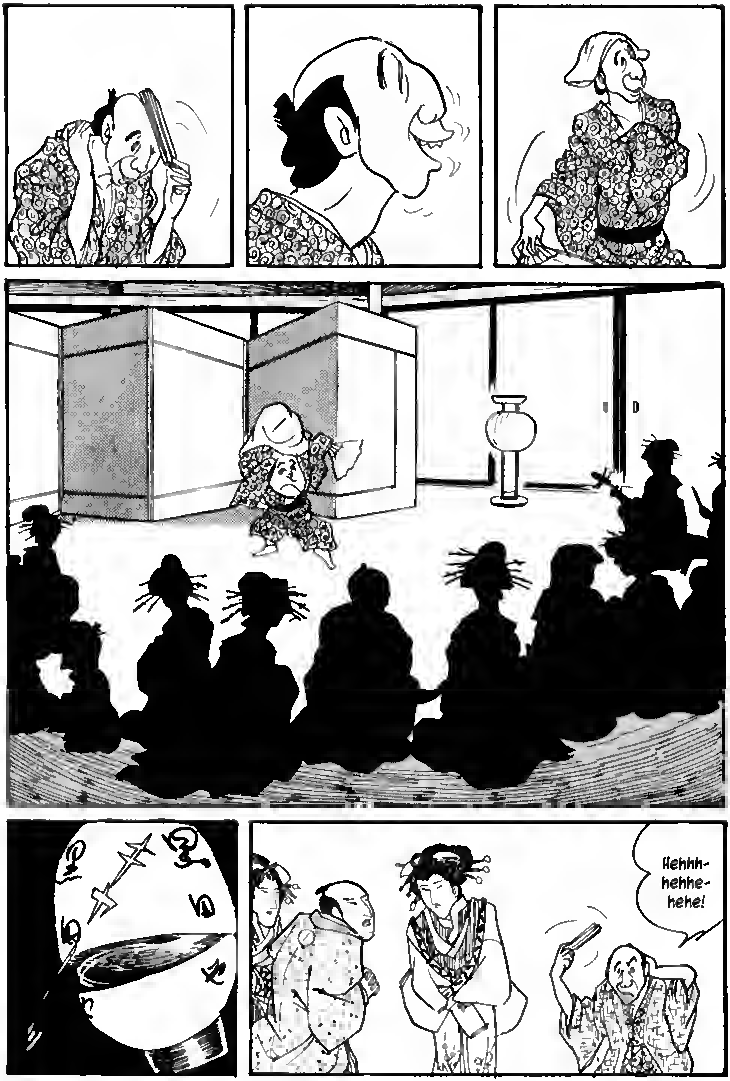
Heh.. Phyahya! That's a perfect sleeping place for a rat...!
Alright, then... Good night.
ゴソゴソ
.....
Ooh... Ooooh...
...Hic!



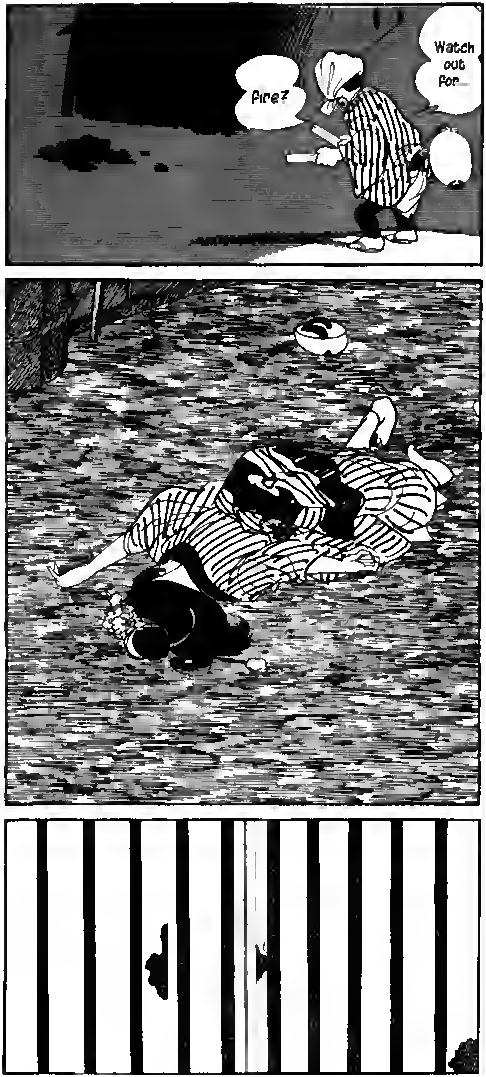

Hehehe-hehe—
I envy you...
You're a great man!
Take care, Master!
.. Hehe,

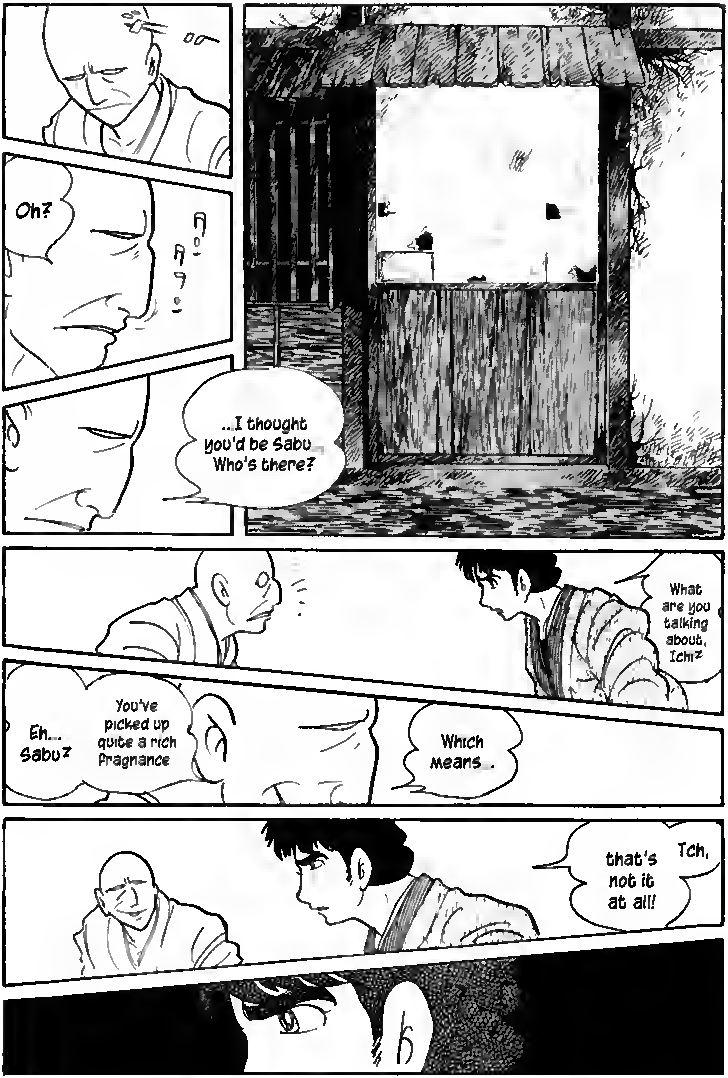


...Yoshi-wara at day-time...
is so dreadfully quiet!
河田や


Hehhh-
hehhe-
hehe!

笑
福
来
Why thank you, Master.. Then let Me have a cup...
Hehehe
Heh...
Come here and have a drink!
Hey, Tada!
Tada!
大福
Whoa... whoa, whoa...


Watch out for...
Pirez
ナチナチ


Oh?
...I thought you'd be Sabu
Who's there?
What are you talking about, Ichi?
Which means...
You've picked up quite a rich fragrance
Eh... Sabu?
Tch, that's not it at all!

"The first corpse was floating in the 'Chaguro Gutter', flowing around Yoshiwara, a young samurai and standard bearer. It looks like after being cut clean in two, he was thrown into the gutter.

"However drunk he may have been, he was a samurai. Whoever did it must have been fairly skilled himself... perhaps another samurai... Perhaps even playmates competing over prostitutes... That would explain it...

"Mr. Tanabe just happened to be working in the district, so he called me in... and we investigated that whole area,

"Then next came the prostitute murder... But wait, that prostitute had no connection at all to the standard bearer's household!

"And just as we were asking ourselves, 'What's going on here?', there came last night's murderer of a prostitute's servant...

"At this point, we didn't have a single idea of what could be going on.

"And on top of that, the location made it harder. The residents are all tight-lipped... and there are plenty of big shots among their customers. The search wasn't going anywhere... But there's one thing we do know. The murderer lives in Omon. Either a customer sneaking out from house arrest, or someone working in the red-light district... And someone skilled with the blade..."

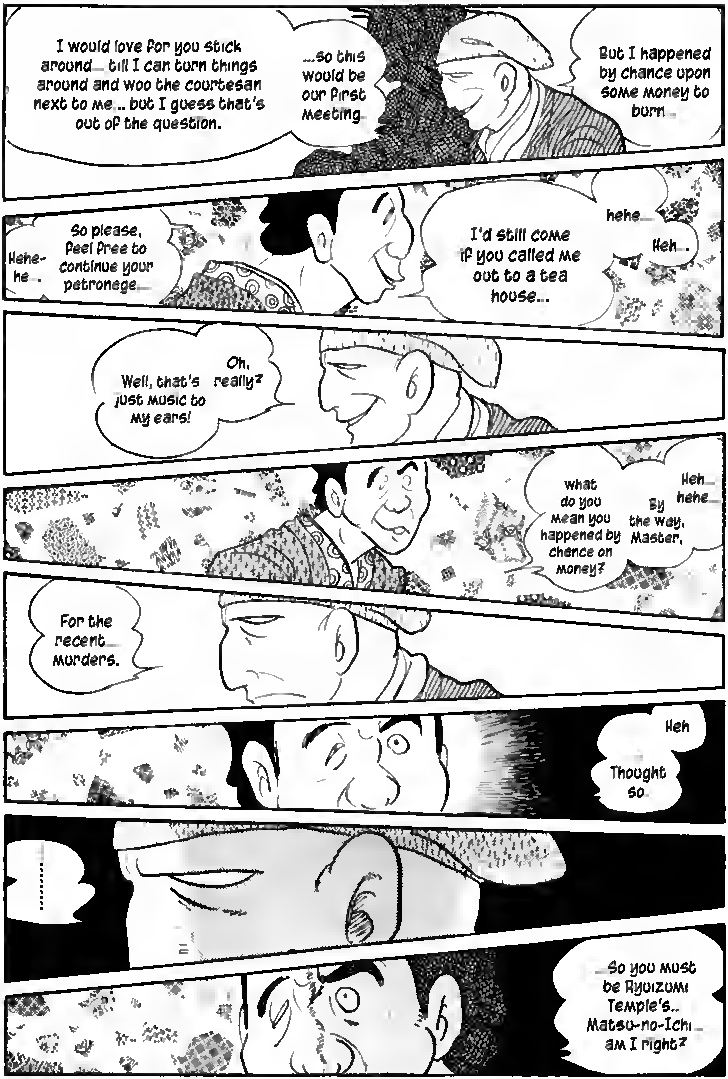
When the rain falls upon Omon... Ehhh, ohhh, ahhh... You with the snake-eyed umbrella, are you Sukeroku? Uhh, of course not! All that's falling is tha rain of my pipe!

Yes, sorry to bore you... Hehe...
Heh... hehe...

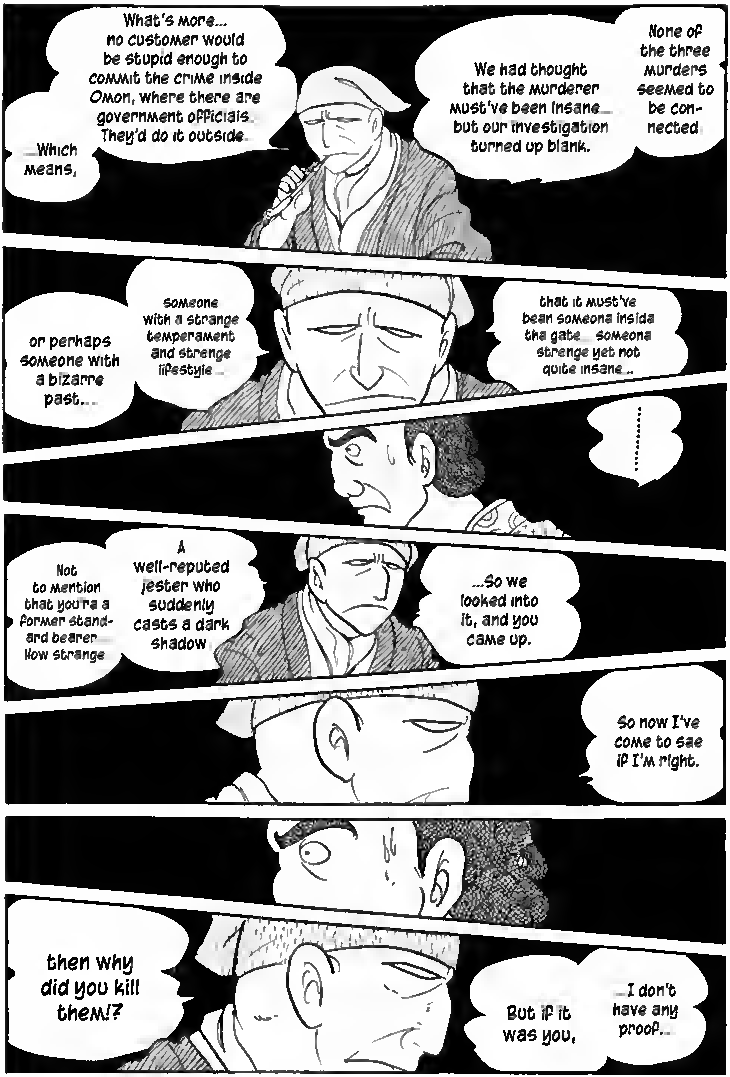
I've been wanting to see you... or perhaps hear you.. For quite some time now.
as they say.
No, you're just as great a jastar...

I have a feeling I've seen you somewhere before... Hehehe...
Is this really our first meeting, Master?
Heh hehe, but...
But whatever the case, I thank you... For calling me here...
Well, I don't know what they're saying about me...
Heh...
hehe-he...

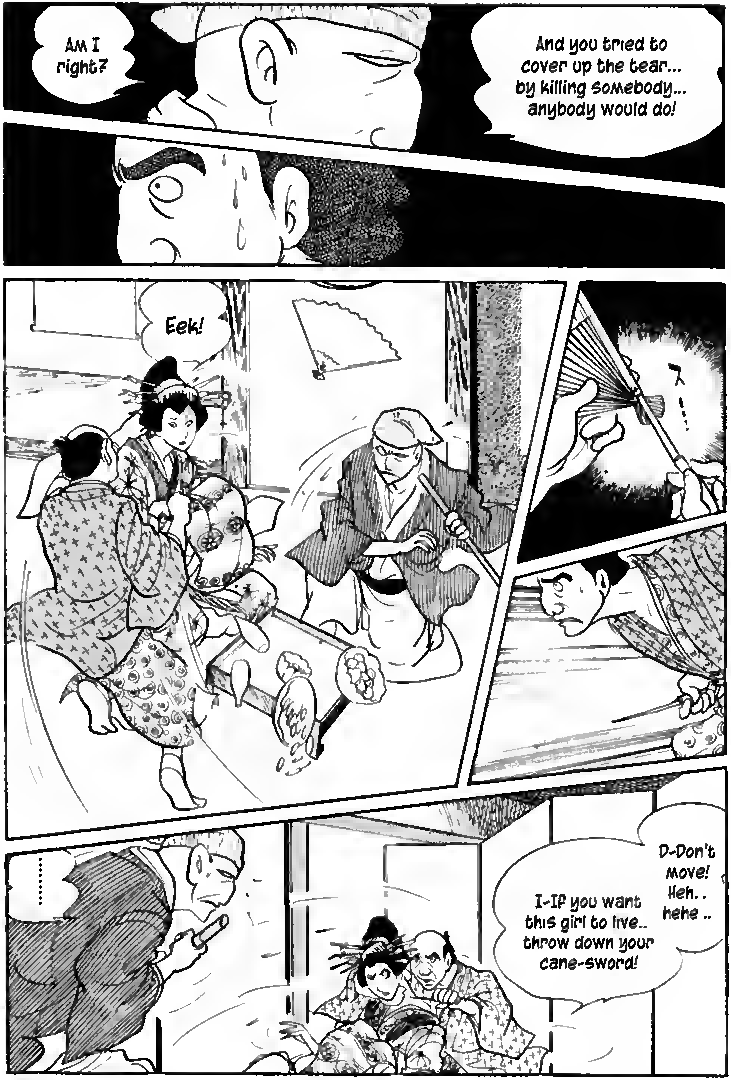
But the closest we get to having a lavish feast is a tea house.
I've been through Omon plenty a time before.
Heh... hehe...

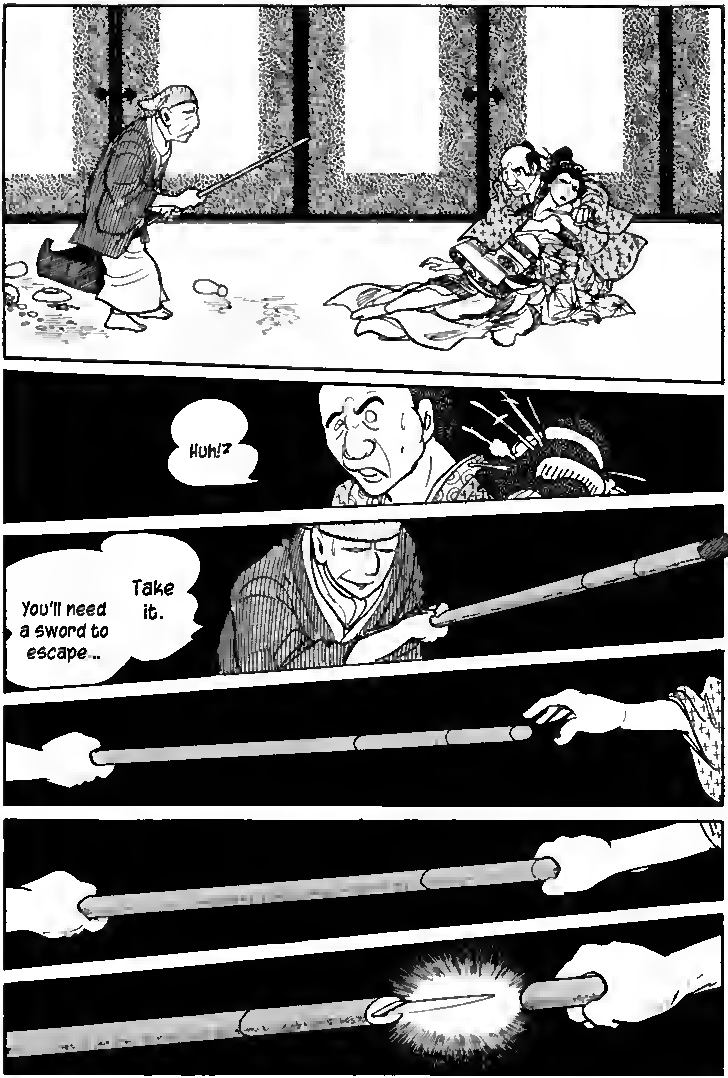

I would love for you stick around... till I can turn things around and woo the courtesan next to me... but I guess that's out of the question.
...so this would be our first meeting.
But I happened by chance upon some money to burn.
So please, feel free to continue your patronage.
Hehe-he..
I'd still come if you called me out to a tea house...
hehe...
Heh..
Oh, really?
Well, that's just music to my ears!
What do you mean you happened by chance on money?
By the way, Master,
Heh hehe...
For the recent murders.
Heh
Thought so.
...So you must be Ryuizumi Temple's... Matsu-no-Ichi... am I right?

How did you know?
Oh?
and Yoshiwara's a place where plenty of rumors about plenty of people gather. It's part of our business... hehe...
Well, you're quite well-reputed.
Heh... hehe...
Are you not...
Formerly... the third son of a certain standard bearer?
...Mr. Tadakichi!
Huh!?
...But if it's true... I'll bet you'd still be able to kill a samurai...
Well, that's how the rumor goes...
and before you knew it, you'd become a jester!
So you would come here day and night,
But you loved the red-light district,
Hehhe-hehe...?
Sabu... you probably already know him... A friend of mine who's a really good thief-taker...
...At first...
worked really hard to dig all that up

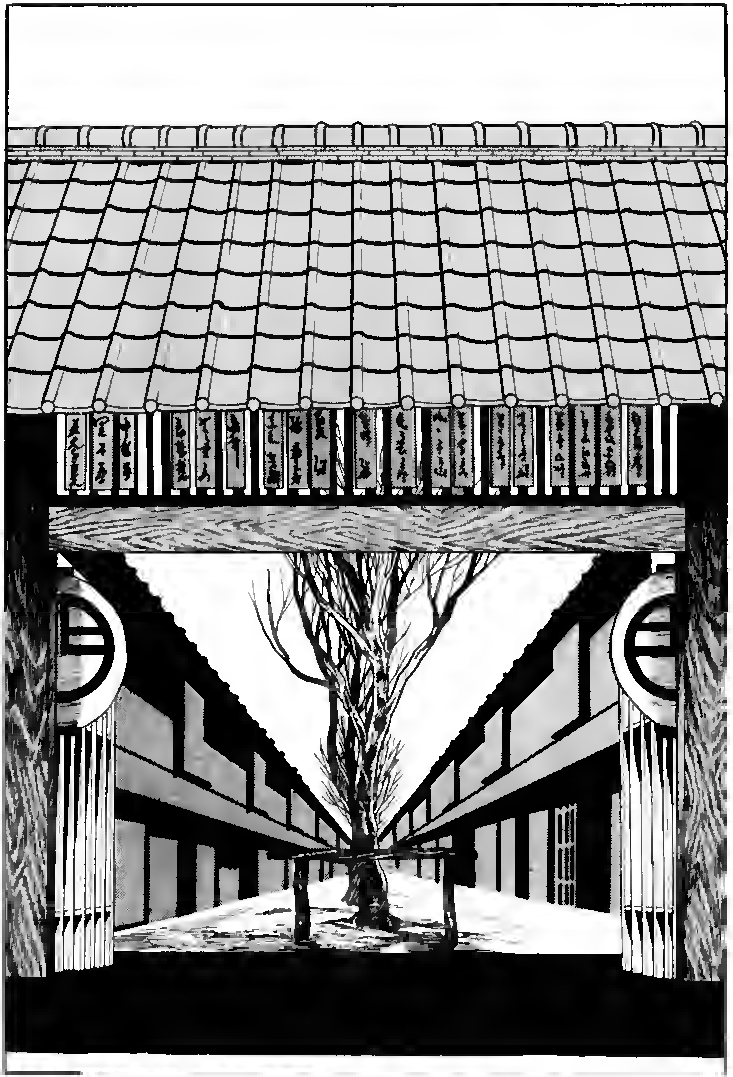

None of the three murders seemed to be connected
We had thought that the murderer must've been insane... but our investigation turned up blank.
What's more... no customer would be stupid enough to commit the crime inside Omon, where there are government officials. They'd do it outside.
...Which means,
that it must've been someone inside the gate... someone strange yet not quite insane...
someone with a strange temperament and strange lifestyle...
or perhaps someone with a bizarre past...
...
...So we looked into it, and you came up.
A well-reputed jester who suddenly casts a dark shadow
Not to mention that you're a former standard bearer... How strange
So now I've come to see if I'm right.
But if it was you,
...I don't have any proof...
then why did you kill them!?

...Shall I say it for you?
You're the third son of a standard bearer... You weren't gonna inherit anything, and you had no hope for your future.
So you started going to the red-light district out of frustration.
And after spending all your money on women, liquor, and gambling... You became a jester to scrape by...
And all your playing up until now has saved you.
But you did an amazing change of character. So much that no one would guess you were once a samurai...
But hold on.
From an outsider's perspective... in fact, I'm pretty sure you yourself would fear this,
your lifestyle as a jester of having to say that white is black
was, little by little, filling your drum with the blackest discontent and rage...
And suddenly, one day...
The swollen drum... burst...!


Am I right?
And you tried to cover up the bear... by killing somebody... anybody would do!
Eek!
D-Don't Move! Heh.. hehe ..
I-If you want this girl to live.. throw down your cane-sword!


Huh!?
You'll need a sword to escape...
Take it.

...So you couldn't make yourself a jester through and through, could you?
A real jester may deceive others, but he is never deceived.
...Also,
You should've just laughed foolishly and talked yourself out of it.
If you had, none of us would've been able to lay a hand on you!



January 1970: "The Burst Drum" (FIN)

佐武と市捕物控

SABU & ICHI

Chapter 27
presented by
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and
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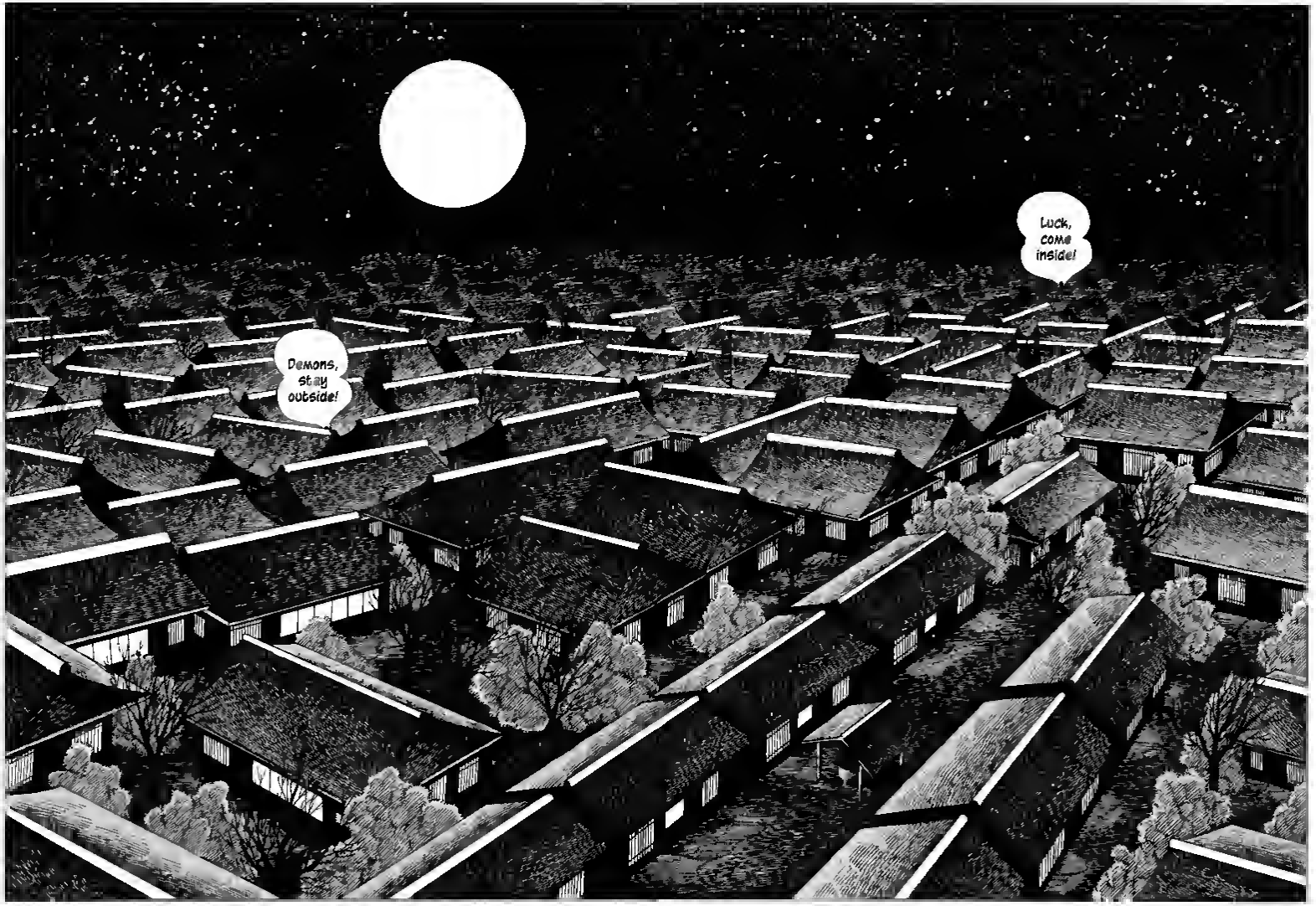
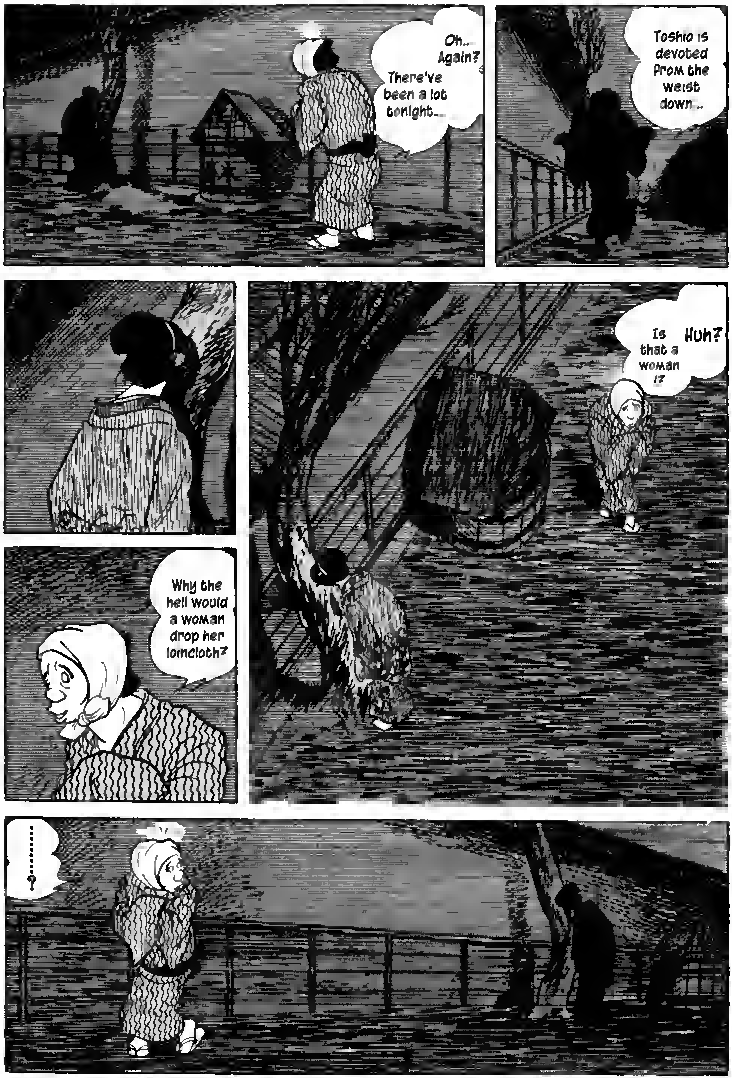
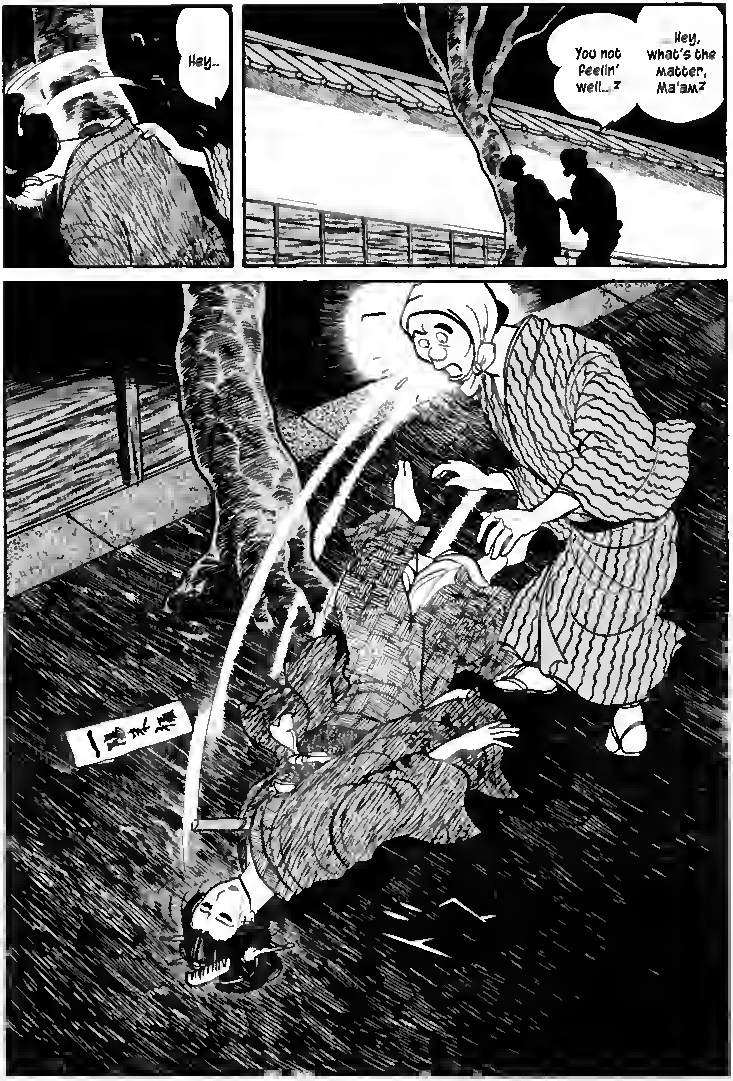
Proofreading by AngelofChaotix

Chapter 28: Demon


Luck, come inside!
Demons, stay outside!

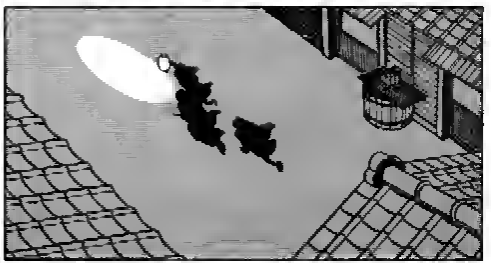
"A DRAWN SWORD AT THE CROSSROADS CAN CUT THRDUGH MISFDRTUNE." THE EDDITES HAD A VERY STRANGE SUPERSTITIDN. IT WENT THAT IF YOU DRDPPED YOUR LOINCLOTH ON THE CROSSROADS WITHOUT ANYONE SEEING, DN THE FINAL DAY DF WINTER, YOU WOULD AVOID DISASTER...
Oh?
I suppose that's auspicious for me now.
Hehhehhe... And Toshio successfully takes it off...
This is a sign of my friendship as a man.
I'll pretend I'm not watching.
Heheh... He's doin' it...

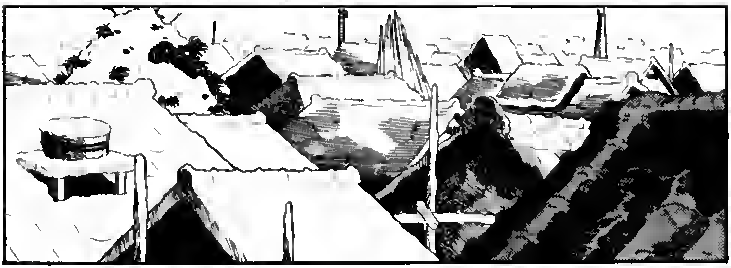

Oh... Again? There've been a lot tonight...
Toshio is devoted from the waist down...
Is that a woman it
Huh?
Why the hell would a woman drop her loincloth?
?

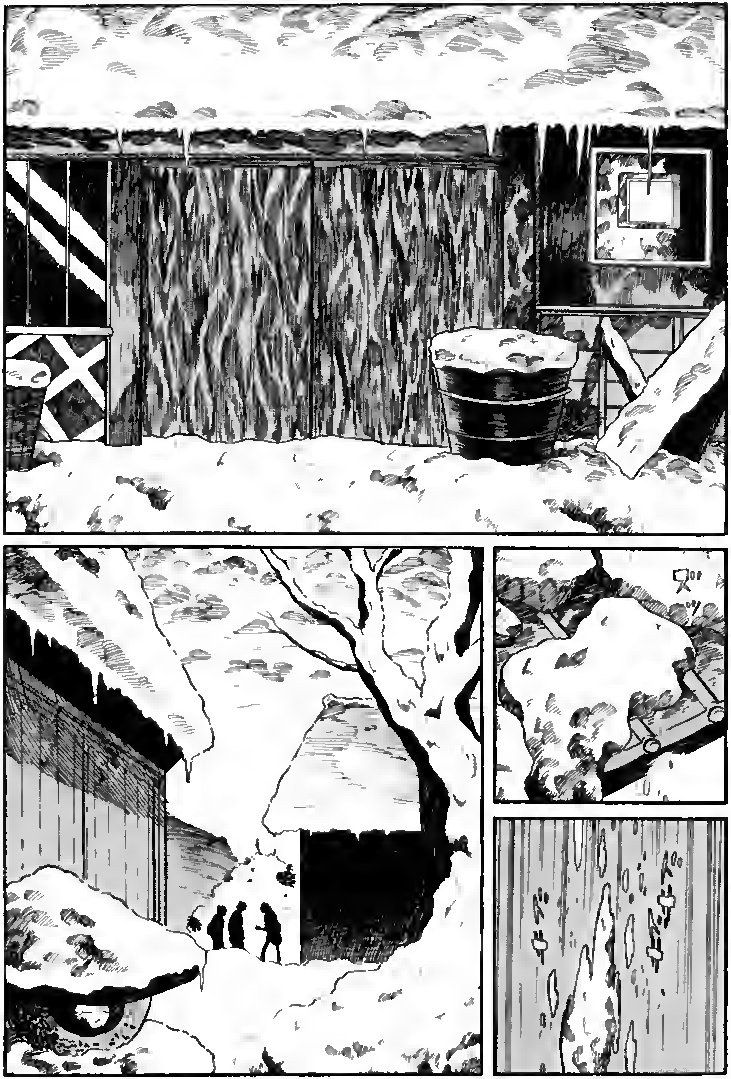

Hey..
You not feelin' well...?
...Hey, what's the matter, Ma'am?

Aieeeeeeeeee!

「弾月」





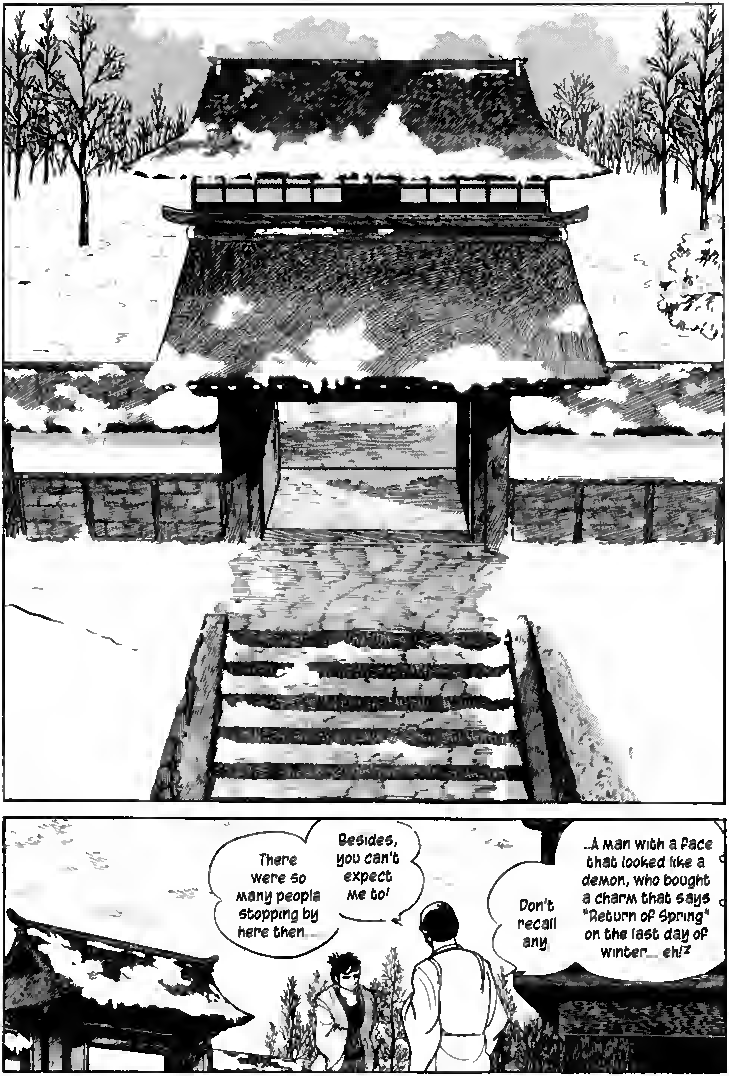


She was kind... and graceful. Yes.
Yes, she was a very fine Madam
She was on very good terms with her husband... Especially after the birth of their child
H-Hey, you think it was him?
Who could have done such a thing...?
The man that came to see the Madam the day before yesterday
The one with a face that looked like a demon...!
...Yes, Sayo was...
a very good wife!
No, no idea...
...A face that looked like a demon...?

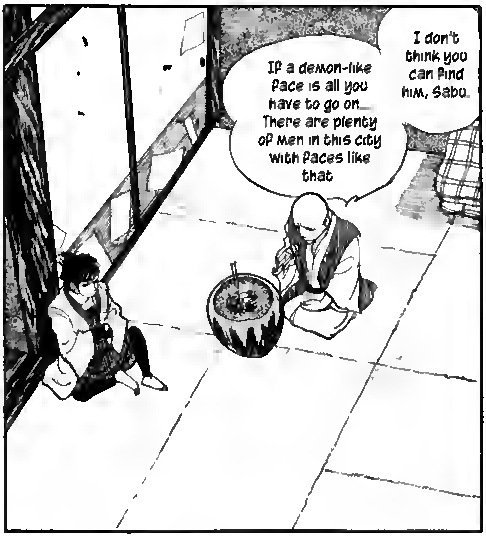
...Yes, three years ago... My first wife passed away...
And as much as I'm ashamed to admit it, about a year ago I was in a tight spot on cash, so my then-maid Sayo lent some to me...
Yes, and that brought us a lot closer...
It was all the money she had worked for and saved up before she came to me...
...She was a hard-working woman... Yes!
Huh?
Where did Sayo work before?
Yes, she told me she worked at an inn named Ogiya near Takadanobaba...

一陽来復

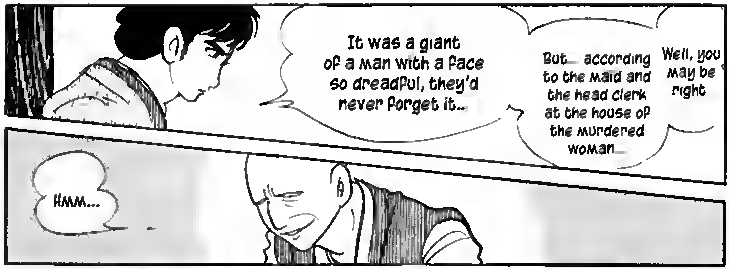
SIGN RETURN OF SPRING

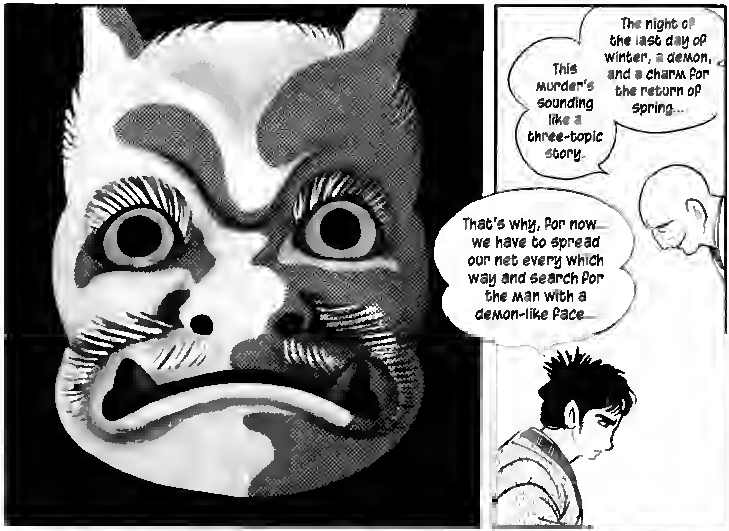

There were so many people stopping by here then...
Besides, you can't expect me to!
Don't recall any
...A man with a face that looked like a demon, who bought a charm that says "Return of Spring" on the last day of winter... eh!?

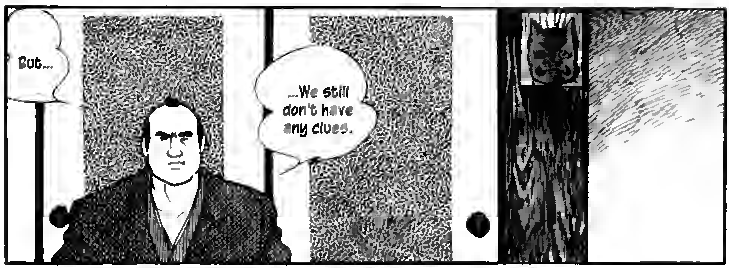
一陽来復


I don't think you can find him, Sabu.
If a demon-like face is all you have to go on... There are plenty of men in this city with faces like that

THIS "RETURN OF SPRING" CHARM WAS SOLD AT THE ANAHACHIMAN SHRINE IN TAKADANOBABA, AND IT WAS BELIEVED THAT AT THE MOMENT SPRING CAME – IN OTHER WORDS, AT MIDNIGHT ON THE LAST DAY OF WINTER, IF THE BEARER OF THIS CHARM WAS FACING TOWARDS THE LUCKY DIRECTION OF THAT YEAR, HE WOULD HAVE NO STRUGGLES WITH MONEY THE WHOLE YEAR.

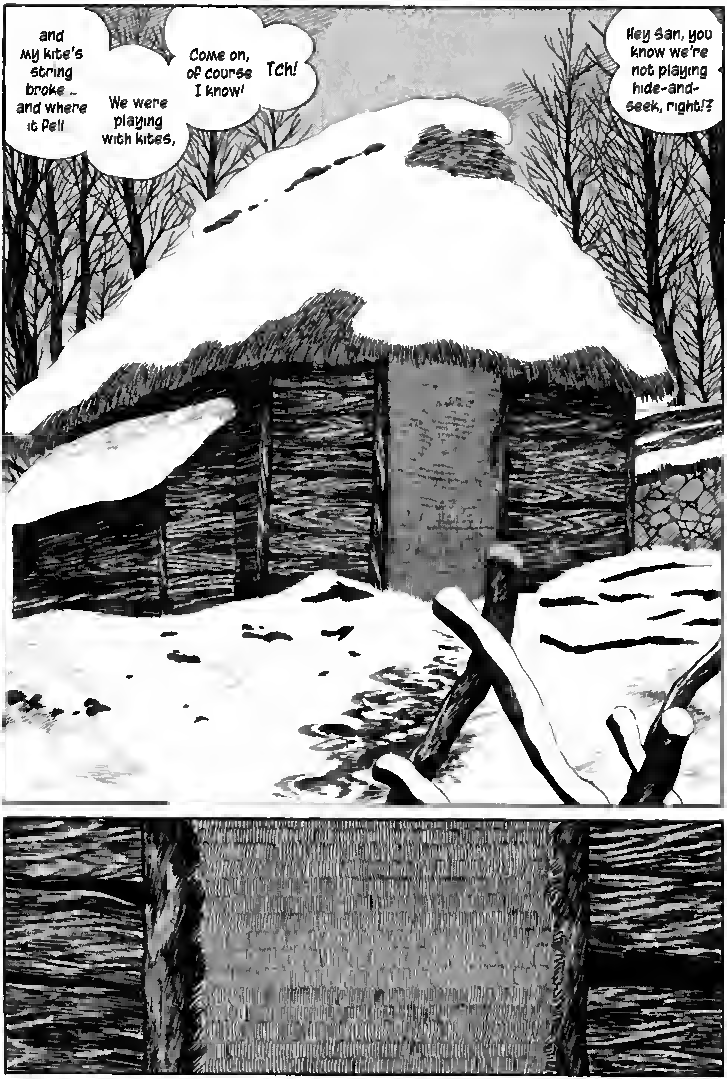

It was a giant of a man with a face so dreadful, they'd never forget it...
But... according to the maid and the head clerk at the house of the murdered woman...
Well, you may be right
Hmm...

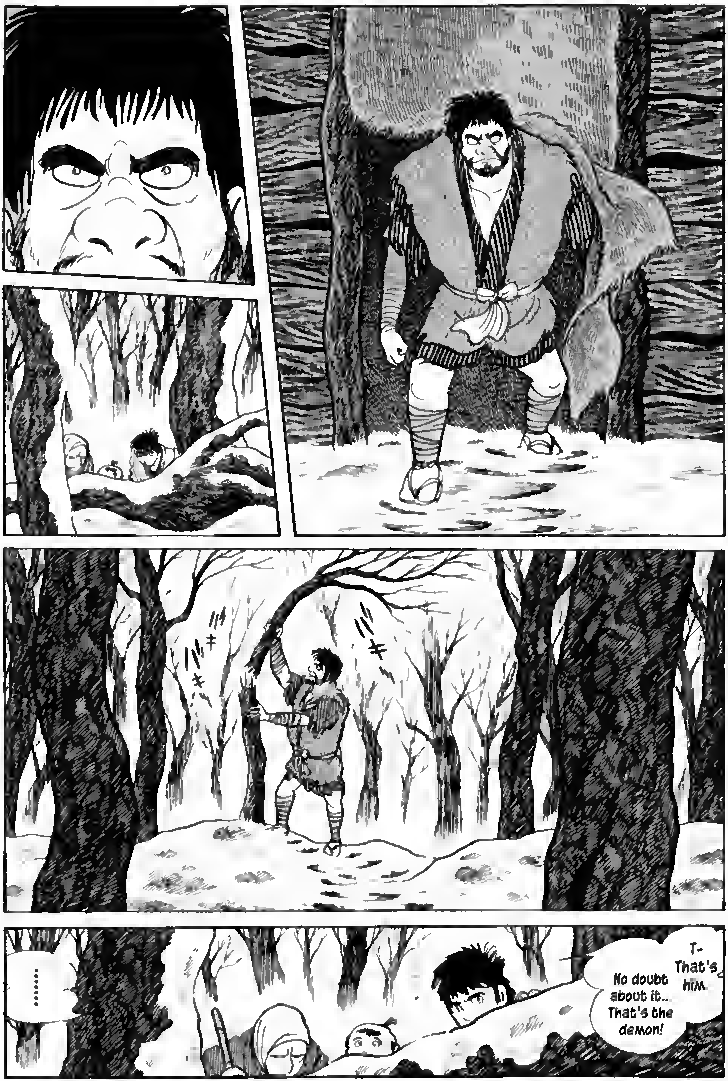

The night of the last day of winter, a demon, and a charm for the return of spring...
This murder's sounding like a three-topic story.
That's why, for now... we have to spread our net every which way and search for the man with a demon-like face...

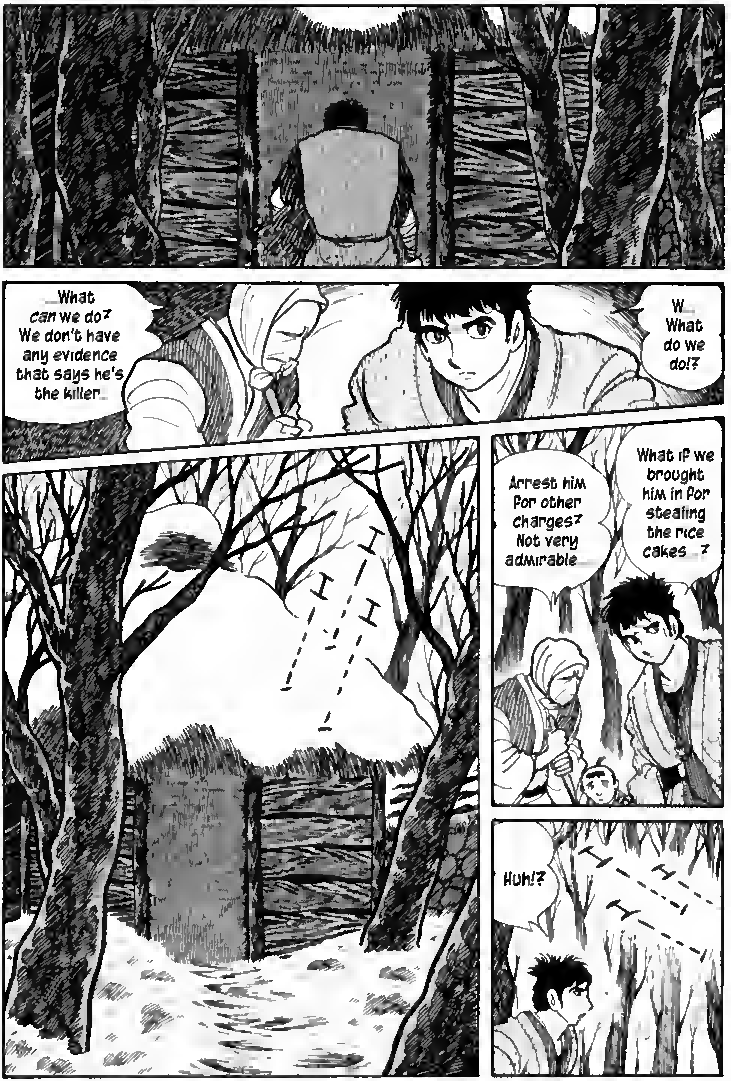

But...
...We still don't have any clues.

八福
Yes, that's right
Last night, a rice cake vendor came to the guard house, saying he was beaten and his rice cakes were stolen
And he said the rice cake thief had a face that looked like a demon...
Rice cakes!?
And damn, was he frightening!
See, look..
He just made off with my rice cakes!
Trust me!
Then before I knew it, he hit me on the side of the face, and when I came to, my rice cakes were gone...
And when he came rlright up to me, he didn't feel the slightest bit human!
You see.. his hair was rampant, his eyes shone and glared, and his mouth went all the way to his ears...
H-H... He really stole my rice cakes...
B-But it's true!
If he hit you on the side of your face, then how is it the back of your head that's hurt?
Hmm.
Well I guess you're right... I-I was in a daze, so I may be remembering it wrong...
Huh!?

S-Sorry, Boss
Truth is..
I'm not saying that you're lying!
.....
And I jumped back in surprise, and stumbled over something -
So I shouted, "Get real!" and he glared at me.
T-That asshole... only had a little bit of money, so he asked me to give him a discount...
Heh... hehe... Sounds like... quite a sloppy demon
And the rice cake vendor was quite angered, so he made a huge show of himself and ran to the nearest guardhouse.
and the demon quickly picked up all the scattered rice cakes and ran - so he says
...So he screamed,
What?
I Pound the demon!
Ah! There you are!
I Pound him, Sabu!

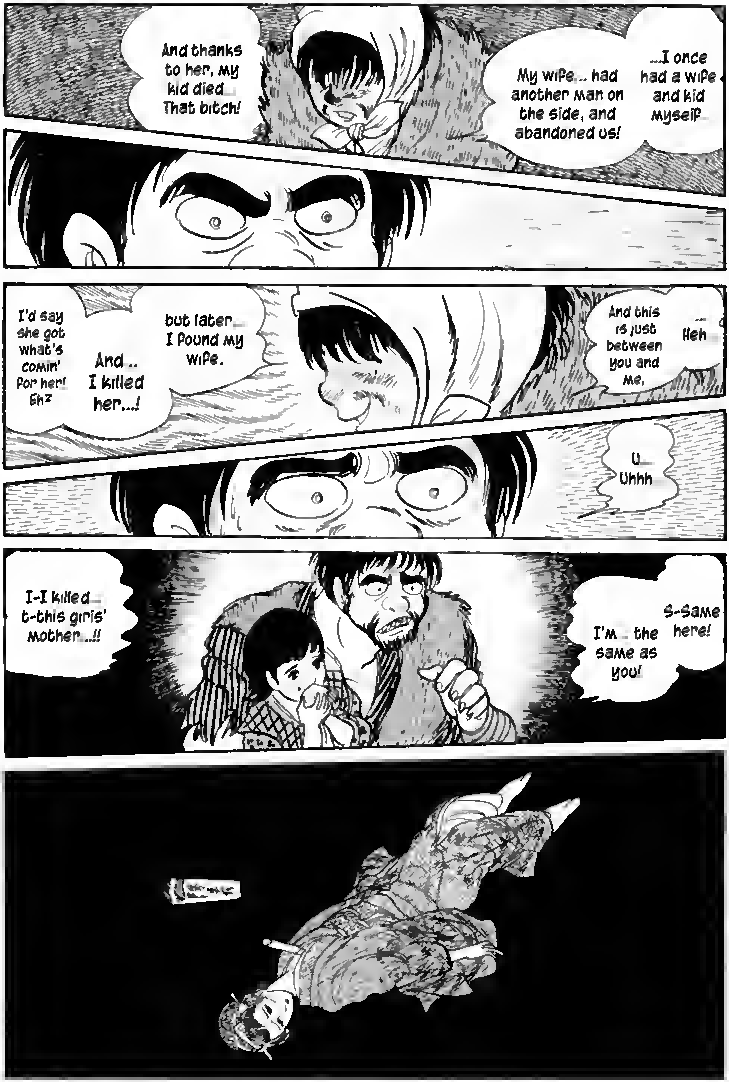

Hey San, you know we're not playing hide-and-seek, right!?
Tch!
Come on, of course I know!
We were playing with kites,
and My kite's string broke... and where it fell


ハキ
ハキ
T-
That's him.
No doubt about it... That's the demon!
……


W... What do we do!?
...What can we do? We don't have any evidence that says he's the killer...
What if we brought him in for stealing the rice cakes...?
Arrest him for other charges? Not very admirable...
エーエーエーン
Huh!?

WAAAAH!
WAAAH!
HUH!?
W-Who's there!?
Well, I saw smoke, so I thought I'd come in to warm up..
Hehehe
Heh..

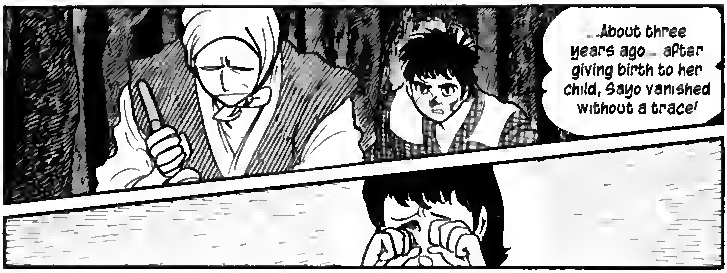
.....
I tell you, once the sun sets, it chills right down to the bone.. Ooh ..
I'm freezing
Phew .. Grrr...
Uhh T-Thanks, I don't need any, but she...
How about I share my earnings with ya? Hehe
Hehe... Whaddya say?
I just ate, ya see.
Heh... You should eat, too. Aren't ye hungry?
And where's that girl's mother...?
Where'd ya come from?
...You're not from around here, are ya?
Uggh

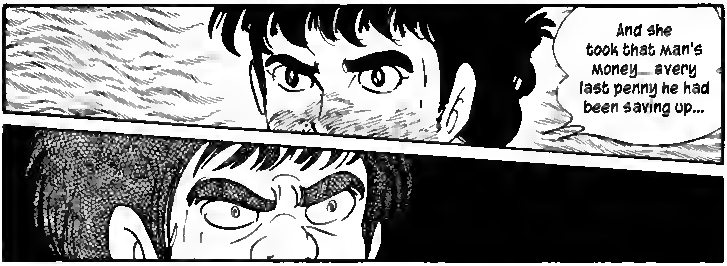

...I once had a wife and kid myself...
My wife... had another man on the side, and abandoned us!
And thanks to her, my kid died... That bitch!
...Heh
And this is just between you and me.
but later... I pound my wife.
And.. I killed her...!
I'd say she got what's comin' for her! Ehz
Uhhh
S-Same here!
I'm.. the same as you!
I-I killed... t-this girls' mother...!!

Wah!!
Urgh ...!
S-Sabu!?

Urrrgh...
I-Ichi, I was right. He... M-Murdered Sayo!!

Waaaah! Waaaah! Waaa... aah!
Sato, get back inside
.....





"...And just ten days ago, he heard rumors that Sayo was in the area, so he came here. And the day before the last day of winter, he finally found her store, and met with Sayo...

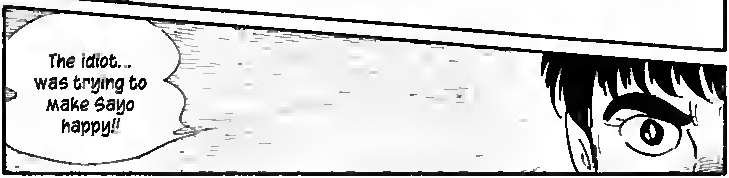
'As long as you're happy, that's all that matters to me. But at least raise your daughter. I can't raise her properly as I am now, and she deserves better.'
'Let's meet again outside tomorrow night and talk this over.'

...But this is what Sayo said the next night.

'Why do you care so much about that girl? That isn't even your daughter.'
He had only slept with Sayo once, and paid money for it!

And after that, Sayo tried to stab him with a dagger she had concealed
And amidst the struggle, he turned the dagger around...

Tch, what an idiot he was! After all she'd done to him, he ran all the way to Arahachiman to buy a charm for the last day of winter and bring it back to her..."



Uwaaaaaaaaaaugh!

Don't pick on Daddy...!!
D...Don't pick on him!!
Auu ggh
A...

February 1970: "Demon" (FIN)

佐武と市捕物控

SABU & ICHI

Chapter 28
presented by
Hokuto no gun
and
Happy scans

Translated by SystematicChaos
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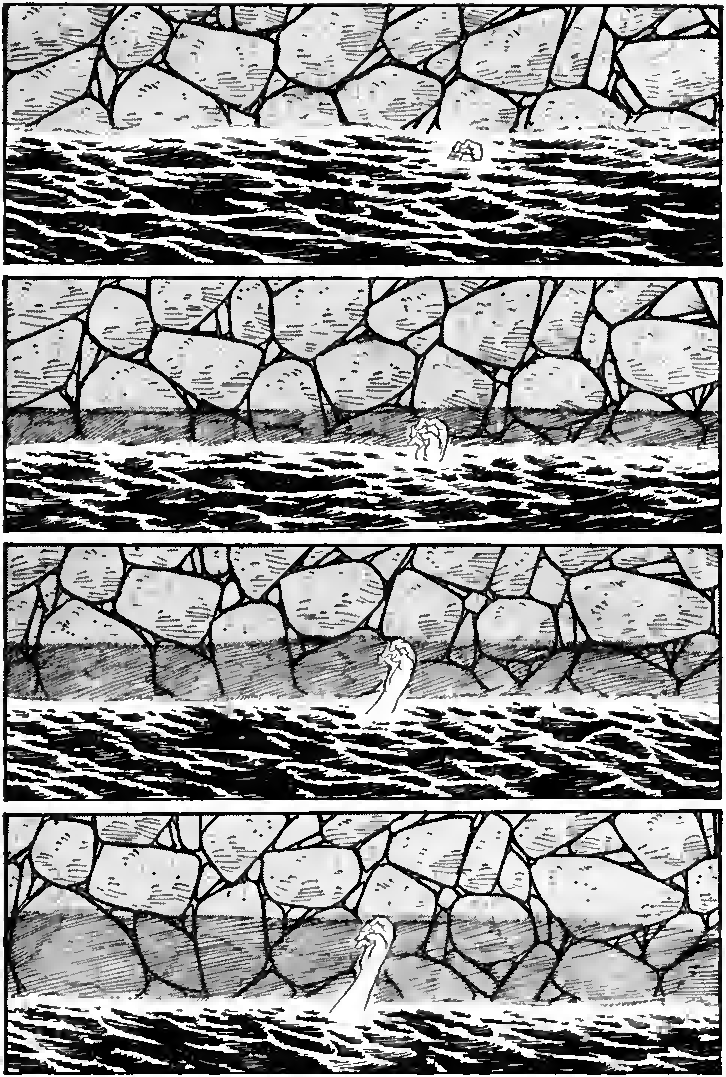
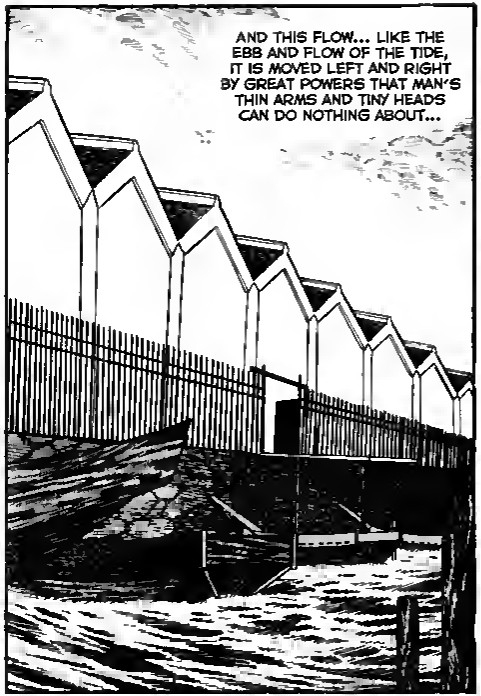
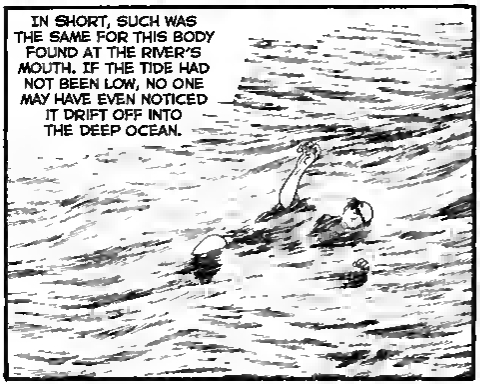
Proofreading by AngelofChaotix

Chapter 29: Low Tide



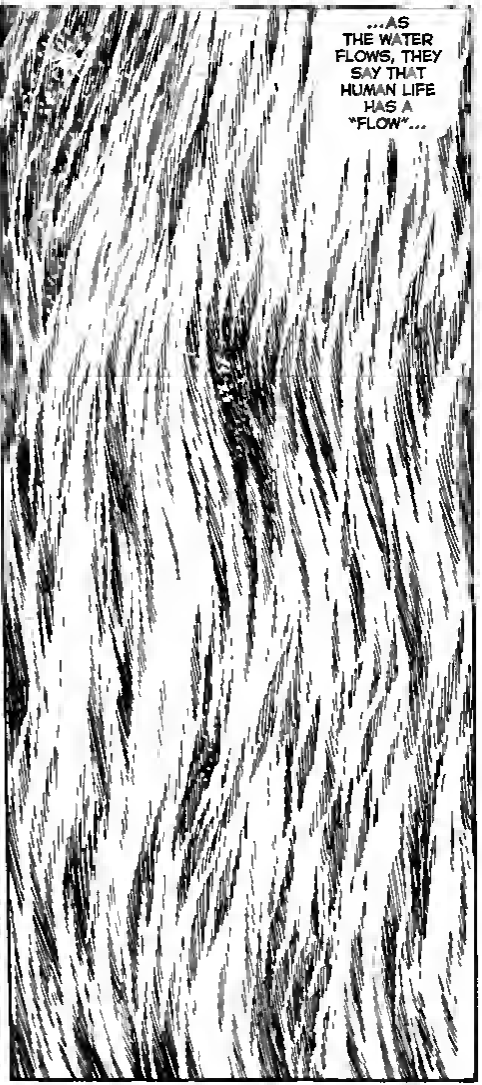

AND THIS FLOW... LIKE THE EBB AND FLOW OF THE TIDE, IT IS MOVED LEFT AND RIGHT BY GREAT POWERS THAT MAN'S THIN ARMS AND TINY HEADS CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT...

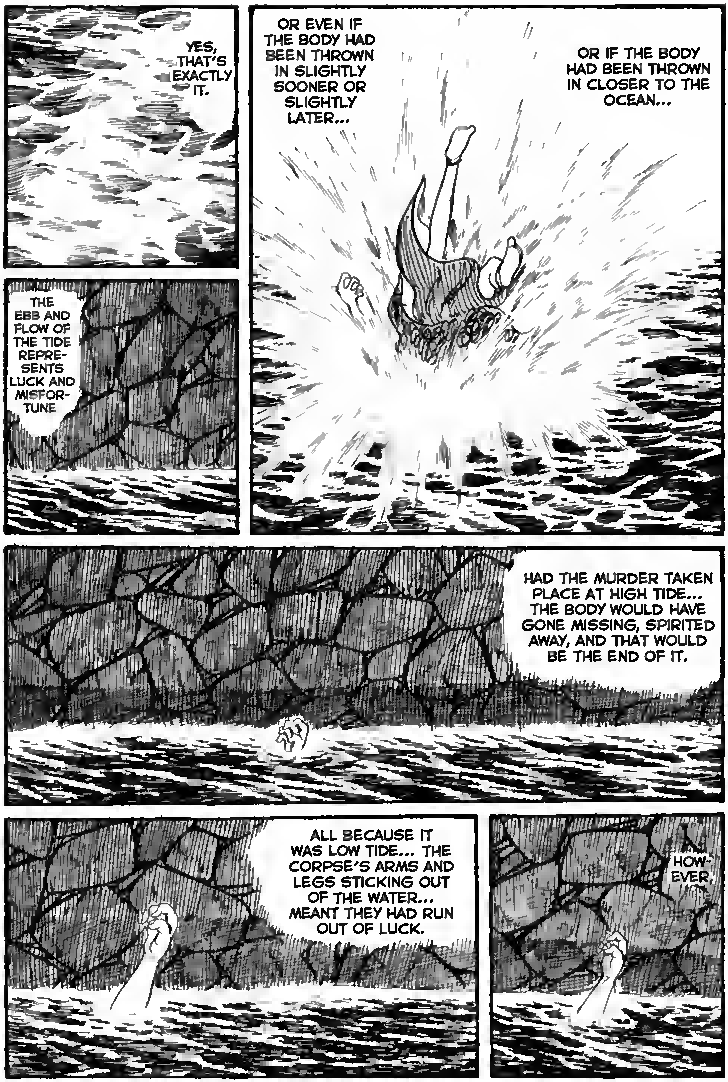

IN SHORT, SUCH WAS THE SAME FOR THIS BODY FOUND AT THE RIVER'S MOUTH. IF THE TIDE HAD NOT BEEN LOW, NO ONE MAY HAVE EVEN NOTICED IT DRIFT OFF INTO THE DEEP OCEAN.

SOMETIMES IT FLOWS SO FAST IT MAKES YOUR EYES SPIN,

OTHER TIMES SO SLOW IT LOOKS STILL.

THERE ARE BOTH DEEP AND SHALLOW PARTS.
SAME WITH THE "PATH" THE FLOW FOLLOWS.

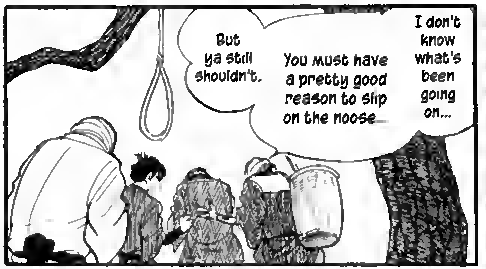

...AS THE WATER FLOWS, THEY SAY THAT HUMAN LIFE HAS A "FLOW"...

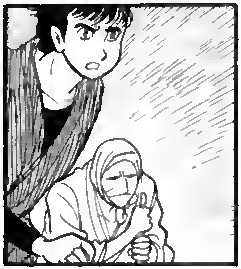

YES, THAT'S EXACTLY IT.
OR EVEN IF THE BODY HAD BEEN THROWN IN SLIGHTLY SOONER OR SLIGHTLY LATER...
OR IF THE BODY HAD BEEN THROWN IN CLOSER TO THE OCEAN...
THE EBB AND FLOW OF THE TIDE REPRESENTS LUCK AND MISFORTUNE
HAD THE MURDER TAKEN PLACE AT HIGH TIDE... THE BODY WOULD HAVE GONE MISSING, SPIRITED AWAY, AND THAT WOULD BE THE END OF IT.
ALL BECAUSE IT WAS LOW TIDE... THE CORPSE'S ARMS AND LEGS STICKING OUT OF THE WATER... MEANT THEY HAD RUN OUT OF LUCK.
AND HOWEVER,

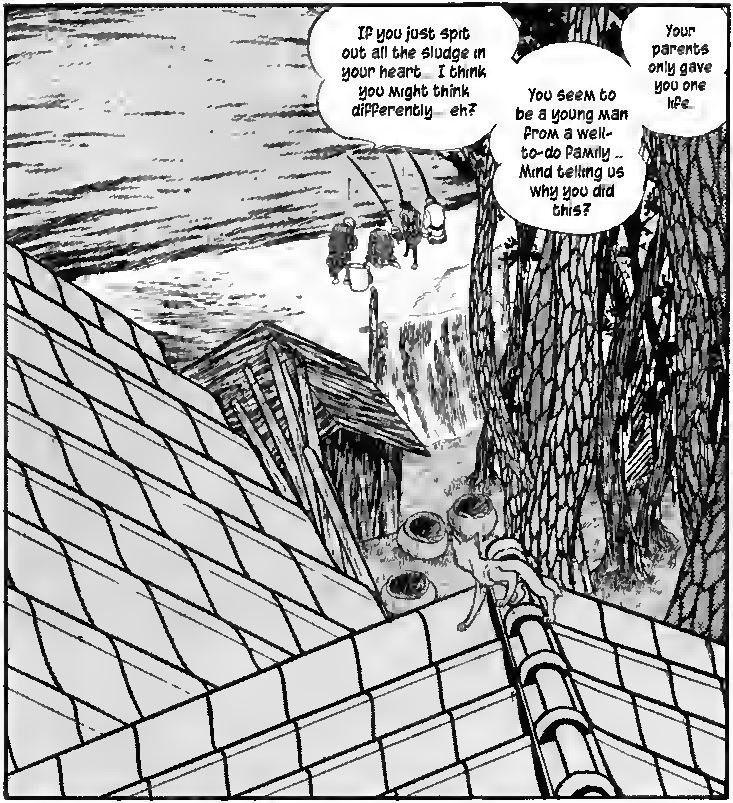
Hold it, hold it!!
Stop this at once! Don't be so hasty!!

Whoa, there.. This ain't good

Once you're dead, that's it.. so they say

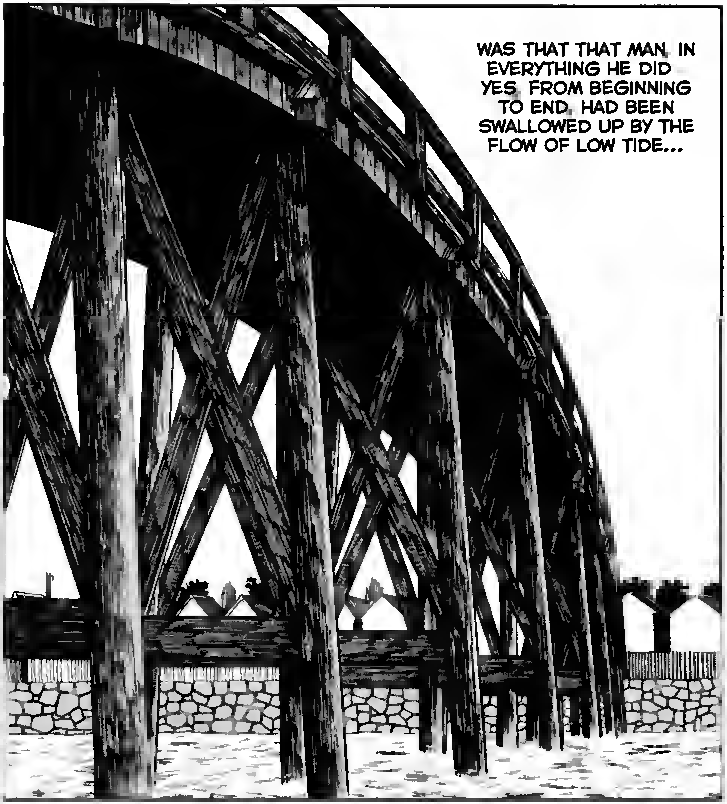

But ya still shouldn't.
You must have a pretty good reason to slip on the noose
I don't know what's been going on...




Your parents only gave you one life.
You seem to be a young man from a well-to-do family... Mind telling us why you did this?
If you just spit out all the sludge in your heart... I think you might think differently... eh?

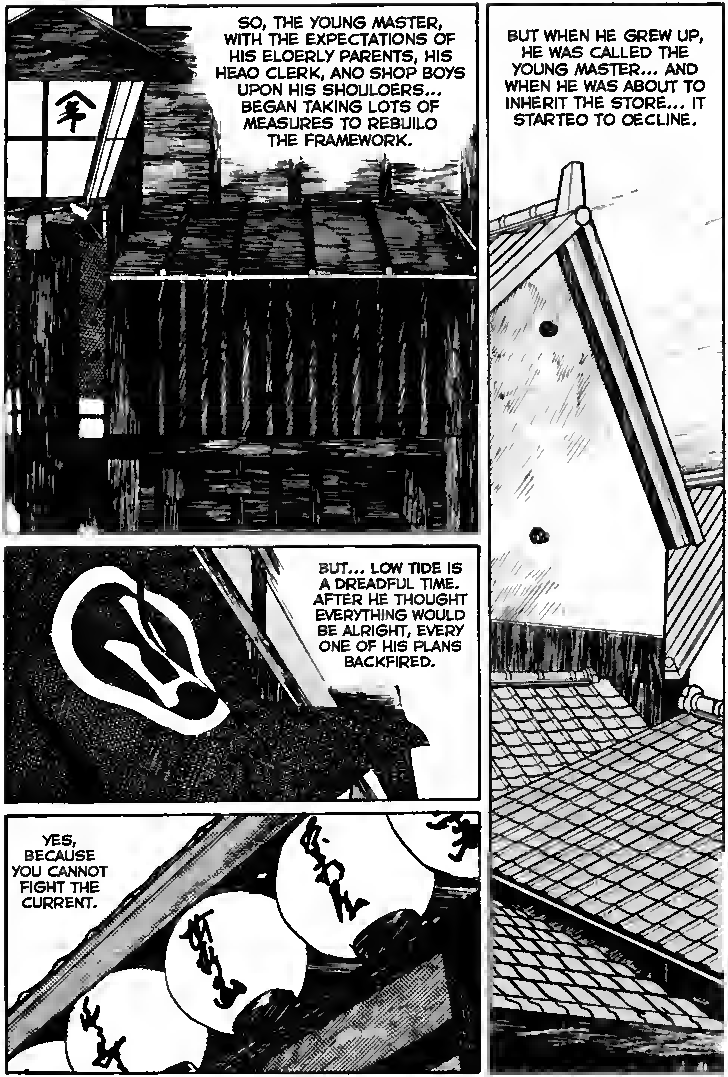
WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE FIRST PLACE...

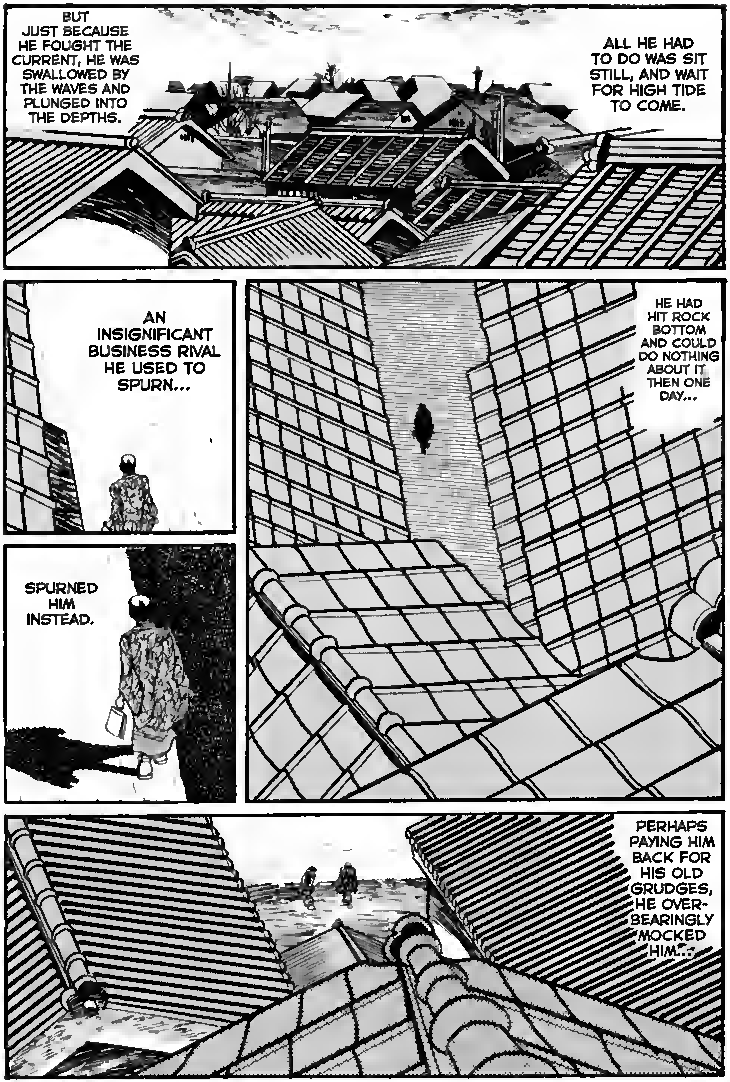
Eh ...!?

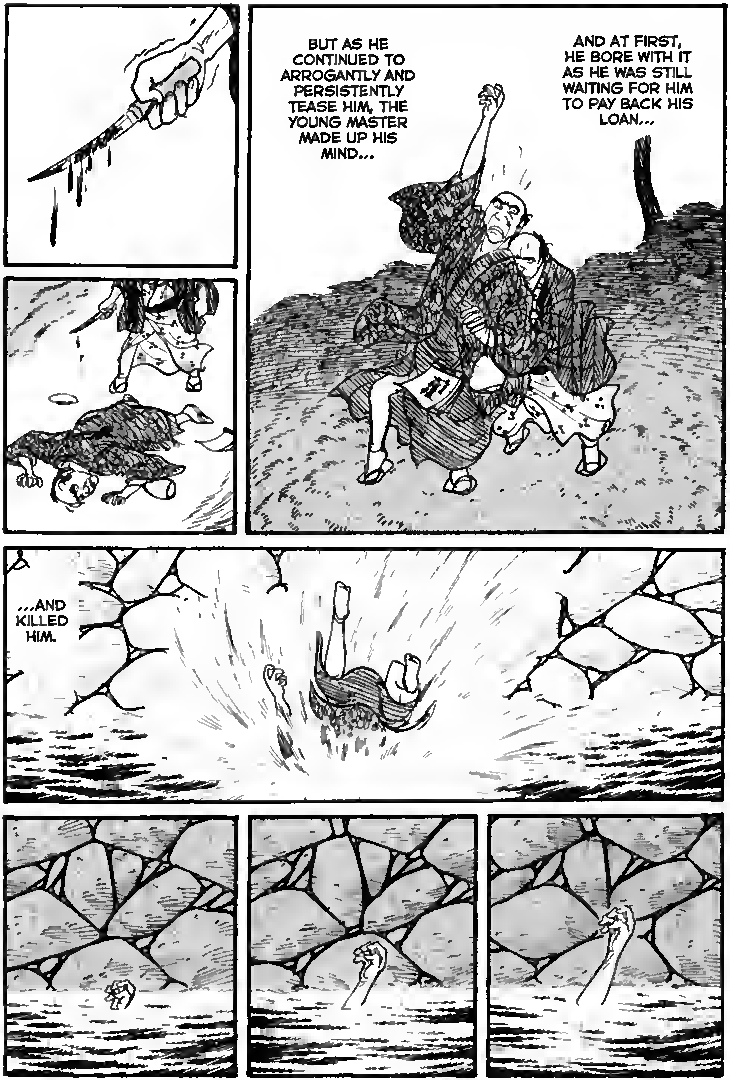

WAS THAT THAT MAN, IN EVERYTHING HE DID YES, FROM BEGINNING TO END, HAD BEEN SWALLOWED UP BY THE FLOW OF LOW TIDE...

IN MORE COMMON WORDS, HE WAS "UNFORTUNATE".

YOU WOULDN'T THINK THAT THAT MAN WAS BORN AS THE ONLY SON OF A LARGE MERCANTILE IN THE KOKUMON DISTRICT. WHEN HE WAS YOUNG, HE WAS RAISED LIKE A PRINCE... AND ALL WAS GOOD UP UNTIL THERE.

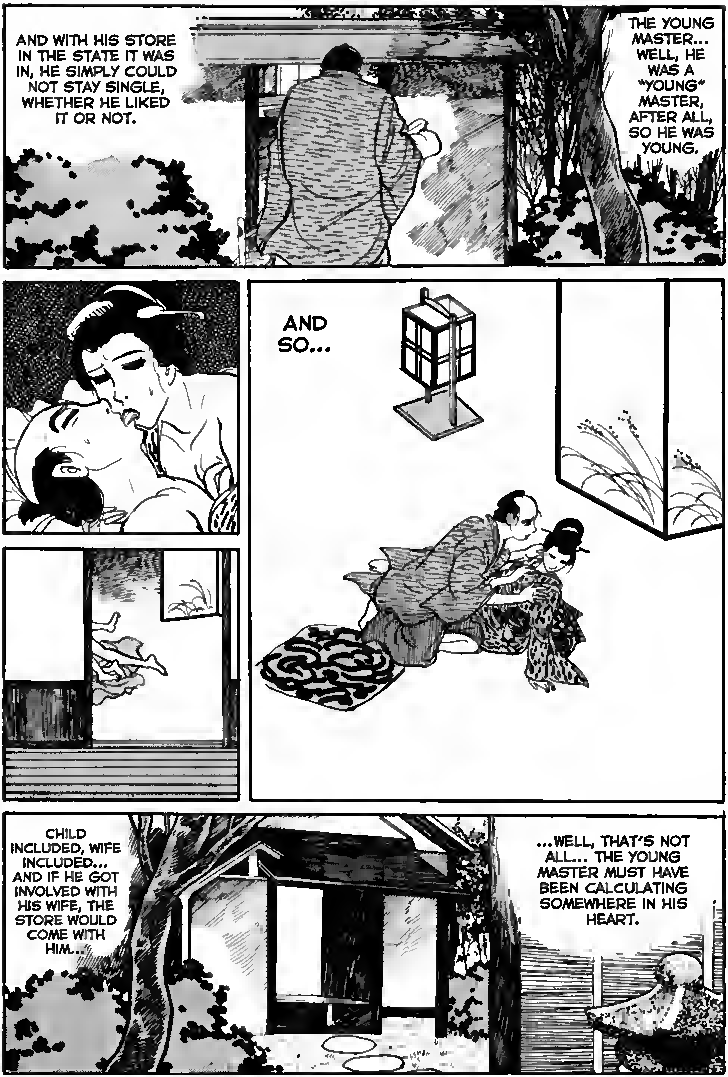

SO, THE YOUNG MASTER, WITH THE EXPECTATIONS OF HIS ELDERLY PARENTS, HIS HEAD CLERK, AND SHOP BOYS UPON HIS SHOULDERS... BEGAN TAKING LOTS OF MEASURES TO REBUILD THE FRAMEWORK.
BUT WHEN HE GREW UP, HE WAS CALLED THE YOUNG MASTER... AND WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO INHERIT THE STORE... IT STARTED TO DECLINE.
BUT... LOW TIDE IS A DREADFUL TIME. AFTER HE THOUGHT EVERYTHING WOULD BE ALRIGHT, EVERY ONE OF HIS PLANS BACKFIRED.
YES, BECAUSE YOU CANNOT FIGHT THE CURRENT.

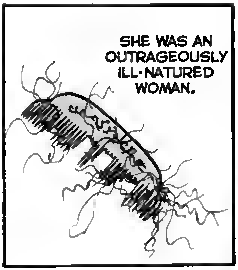

BUT JUST BECAUSE HE FOUGHT THE CURRENT, HE WAS SWALLOWED BY THE WAVES AND PLUNGED INTO THE DEPTHS.
ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS SIT STILL, AND WAIT FOR HIGH TIDE TO COME.
AN INSIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RIVAL HE USED TO SPURN...
HE HAD HIT ROCK BOTTOM AND COULD DO NOTHING ABOUT IT. THEN ONE DAY...
SPURNED HIM INSTEAD.
PERHAPS PAYING HIM BACK FOR HIS OLD GRUDGES, HE OVER-BEARINGLY MOCKED HIM...

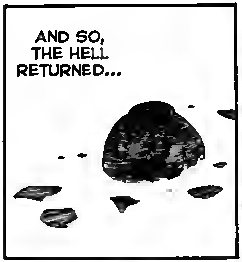

BUT AS HE CONTINUED TO ARROGANTLY AND PERSISTENTLY TEASE HIM, THE YOUNG MASTER MADE UP HIS MIND...
AND AT FIRST, HE BORE WITH IT AS HE WAS STILL WAITING FOR HIM TO PAY BACK HIS LOAN...
...AND KILLED HIM.

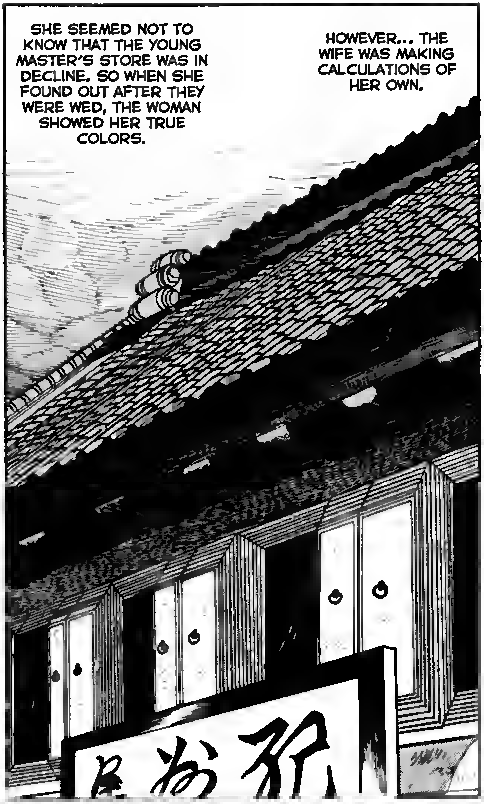
BECAUSE OF THE CONTRACT HE TOOK FROM THE BODY...
AFTER A WHILE, WHEN HE CAUGHT HIS BREATH,
FOR WHATEVER REASON, THE AUTHORITIES NEVER CAME FOR HIM...
...WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S TRUE WHAT MR. OTA SAID, THAT IT'S HARD TO TRACK DOWN A CRIMINAL...
NOW, HERE IS ONE MORE TALE TO PROVE THAT THE POWER OF LOW TIDE IS UNCONTROLLABLE.
THE YOUNG MASTER HAD KILLED A MAN... YET HE COULD NOT MAKE HIMSELF A VILLAIN TO THE CORE.
AND EVER SINCE... THE FACE AND VOICE OF THE MAN IN HIS DYING MOMENTS... AND THE SMELL OF BLOOD WOULD HAUNT HIM...

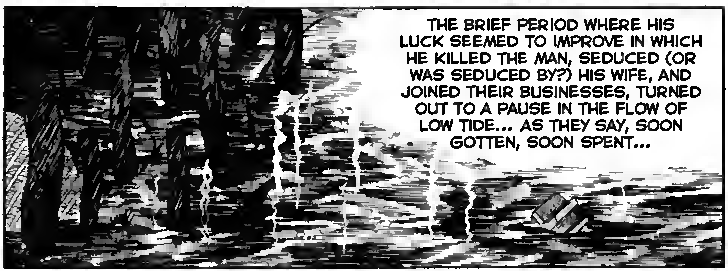
AND HE GOT SO ANXIOUS... HE COULDN'T JUST DO NOTHING.
THE YOUNG MASTER SUDDENLY THOUGHT ABOUT THE WIFE AND CHILDREN OF THE MAN HE KILLED...!!
SO, BECAUSE OF THAT, A LITTLE BIT OF LEEWAY RETURNED TO HIS LIFESTYLE.
HOW ARE THEY DOING WITH THEIR HUSBAND KILLED...?
AND SO, HE ENDED UP SHOWING HIMSELF AT THE MAN'S HOUSE.
YES, THE YOUNG MASTER HAD AN INCURABLE FAINT HEART.
THE MAN'S WIFE WAS STILL YOUNG... SHE WAS A WOMAN TOO GOOD FOR THE MAN.

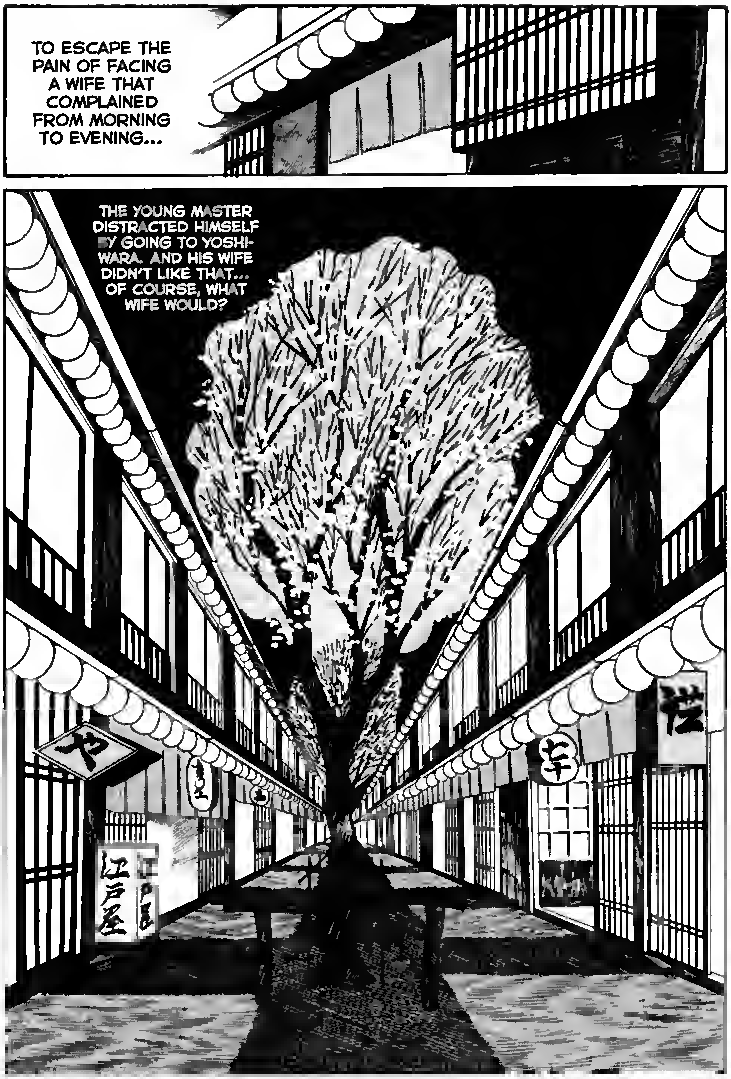

AND WITH HIS STORE IN THE STATE IT WAS IN, HE SIMPLY COULD NOT STAY SINGLE, WHETHER HE LIKED IT OR NOT.
THE YOUNG MASTER... WELL, HE WAS A "YOUNG" MASTER, AFTER ALL, SO HE WAS YOUNG.
AND SO...
CHILD INCLUDED, WIFE INCLUDED... AND IF HE GOT INVOLVED WITH HIS WIFE, THE STORE WOULD COME WITH HIM...
...WELL, THAT'S NOT ALL... THE YOUNG MASTER MUST HAVE BEEN CALCULATING SOMEWHERE IN HIS HEART.


SHE WAS AN OUTRAGEOUSLY ILL-NATURED WOMAN.

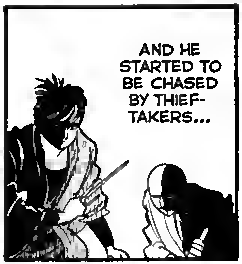

AND SO, THE HELL RETURNED...

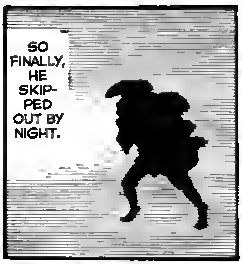

SHE SEEMED NOT TO KNOW THAT THE YOUNG MASTER'S STORE WAS IN DECLINE. SO WHEN SHE FOUND OUT AFTER THEY WERE WED, THE WOMAN SHOWED HER TRUE COLORS.
HOWEVER... THE WIFE WAS MAKING CALCULATIONS OF HER OWN.

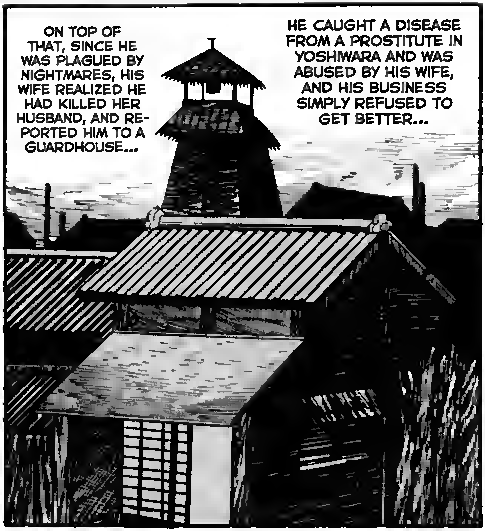

THE BRIEF PERIOD WHERE HIS LUCK SEEMED TO IMPROVE IN WHICH HE KILLED THE MAN, SEDUCED (OR WAS SEDUCED BY?) HIS WIFE, AND JOINED THEIR BUSINESSES, TURNED OUT TO A PAUSE IN THE FLOW OF LOW TIDE... AS THEY SAY, SOON GOTTEN, SOON SPENT...

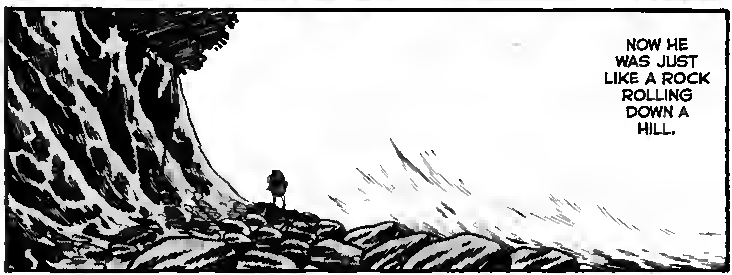

TO ESCAPE THE PAIN OF FACING A WIFE THAT COMPLAINED FROM MORNING TO EVENING...
THE YOUNG MASTER DISTRACTED HIMSELF BY GOING TO YOSHIWARA. AND HIS WIFE DIDN'T LIKE THAT... OF COURSE, WHAT WIFE WOULD?
江戸屋

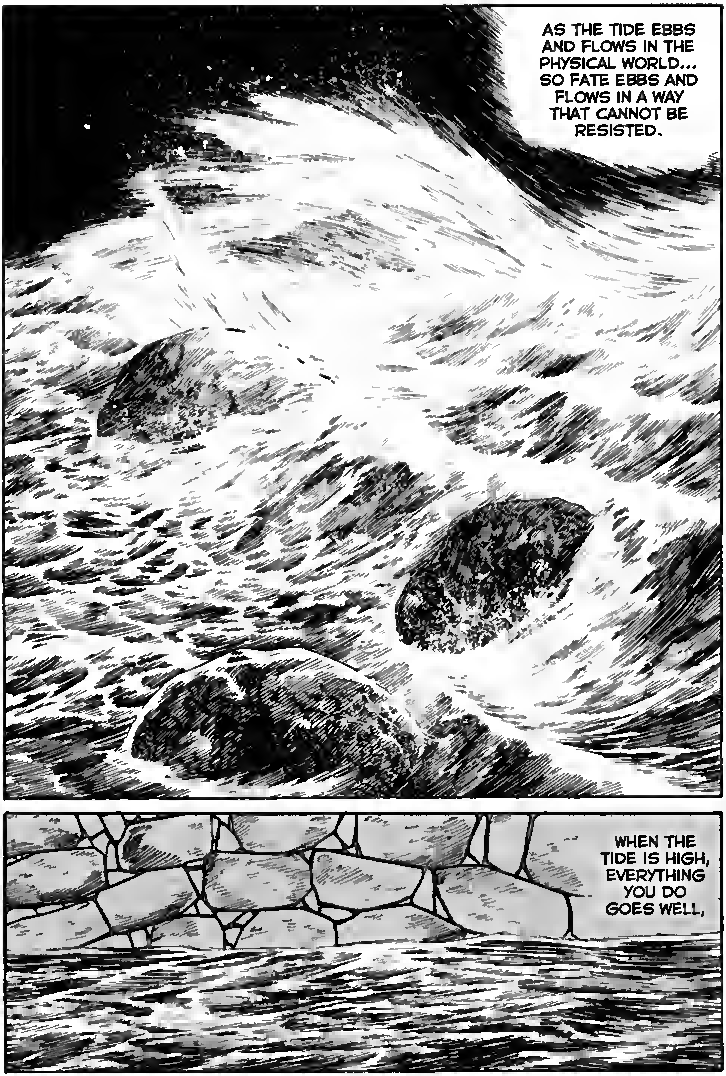
YES, TRULY... THIS IS THE POWER OF LOW TIDE. IF ONLY HIS WIFE WAS A BETTER WOMAN... IS WHAT A NARROW-MINDED MAN WOULD THINK...

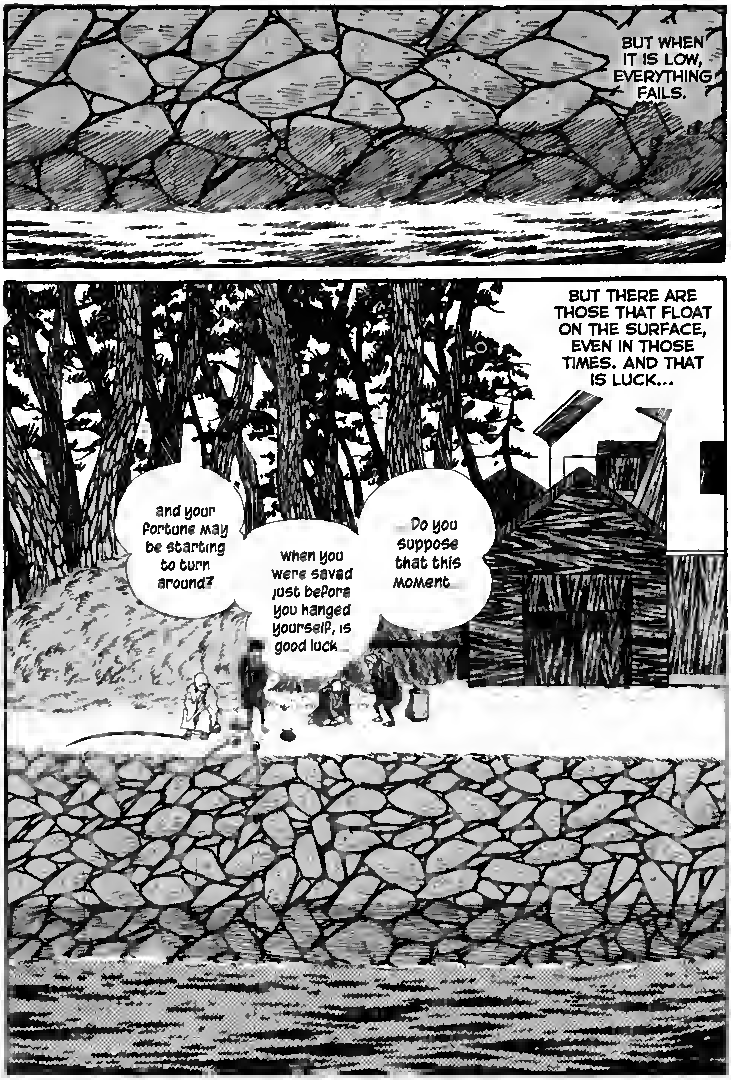

AND HE STARTED TO BE CHASED BY THIEF-TAKERS...


SO FINALLY, HE SKIP-PED OUT BY NIGHT.


ON TOP OF THAT, SINCE HE WAS PLAGUED BY NIGHTMARES, HIS WIFE REALIZED HE HAD KILLED HER HUSBAND, AND RE-PORTED HIM TO A GUARDHOUSE...
HE CAUGHT A DISEASE FROM A PROSTITUTE IN YOSHIWARA AND WAS ABUSED BY HIS WIFE, AND HIS BUSINESS SIMPLY REFUSED TO GET BETTER...

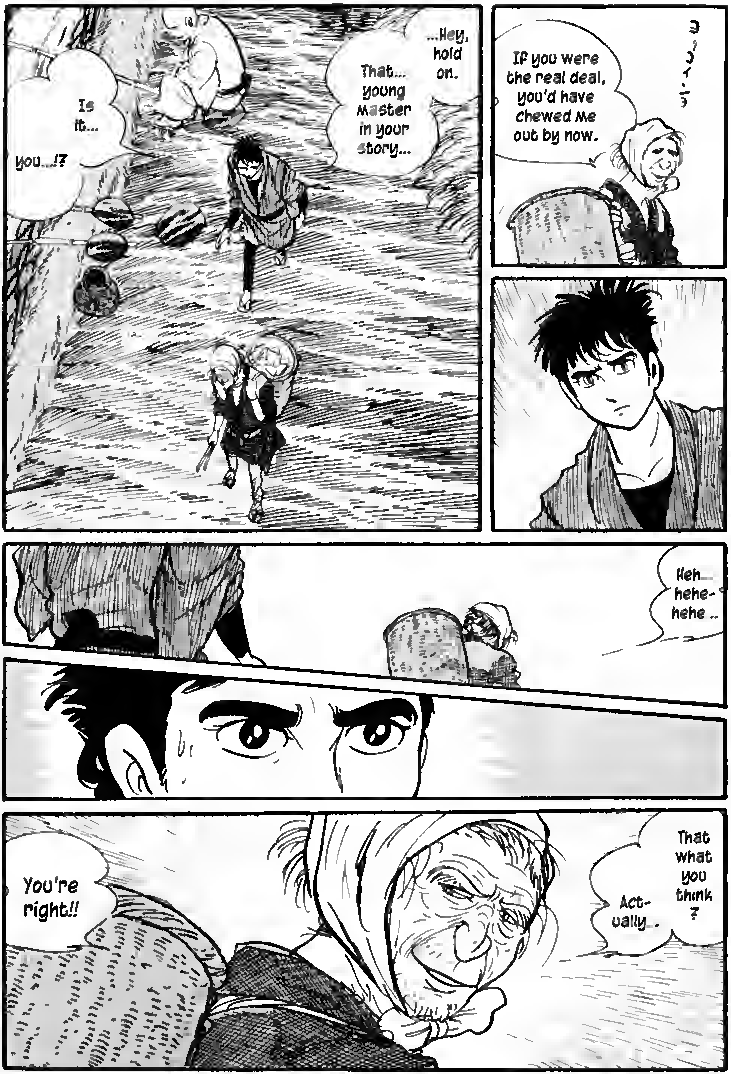

NOW HE WAS JUST LIKE A ROCK ROLLING DOWN A HILL.

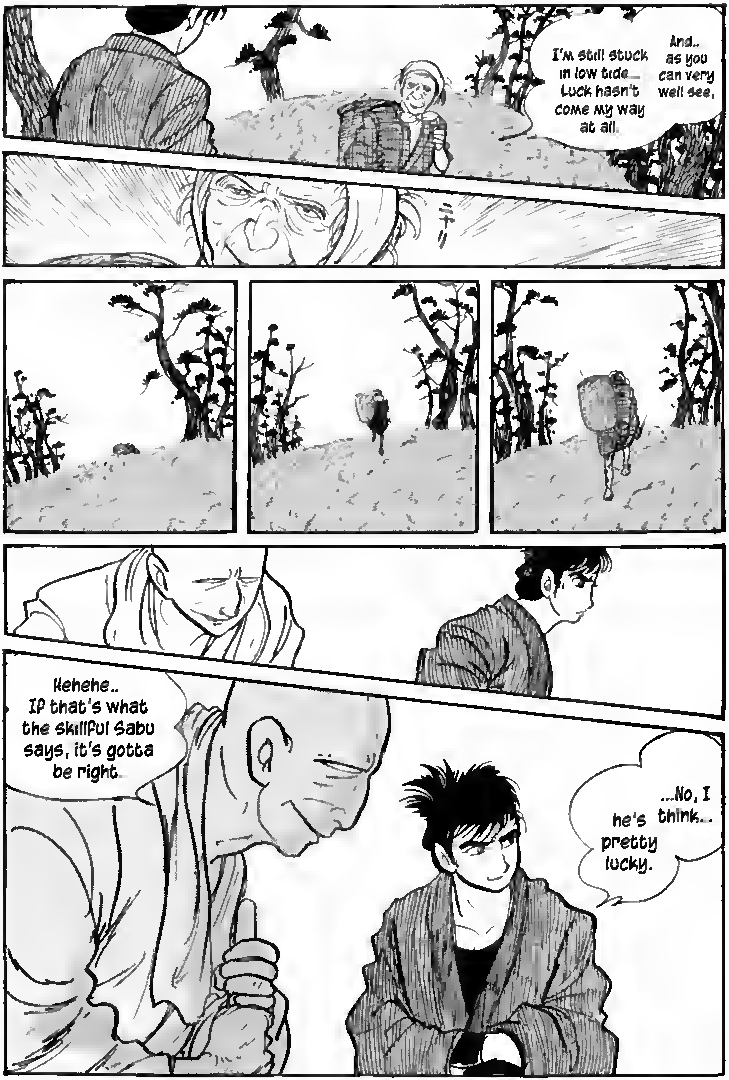

AS THE TIDE EBBS AND FLOWS IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD... SO FATE EBBS AND FLOWS IN A WAY THAT CANNOT BE RESISTED.
WHEN THE TIDE IS HIGH, EVERYTHING YOU DO GOES WELL,

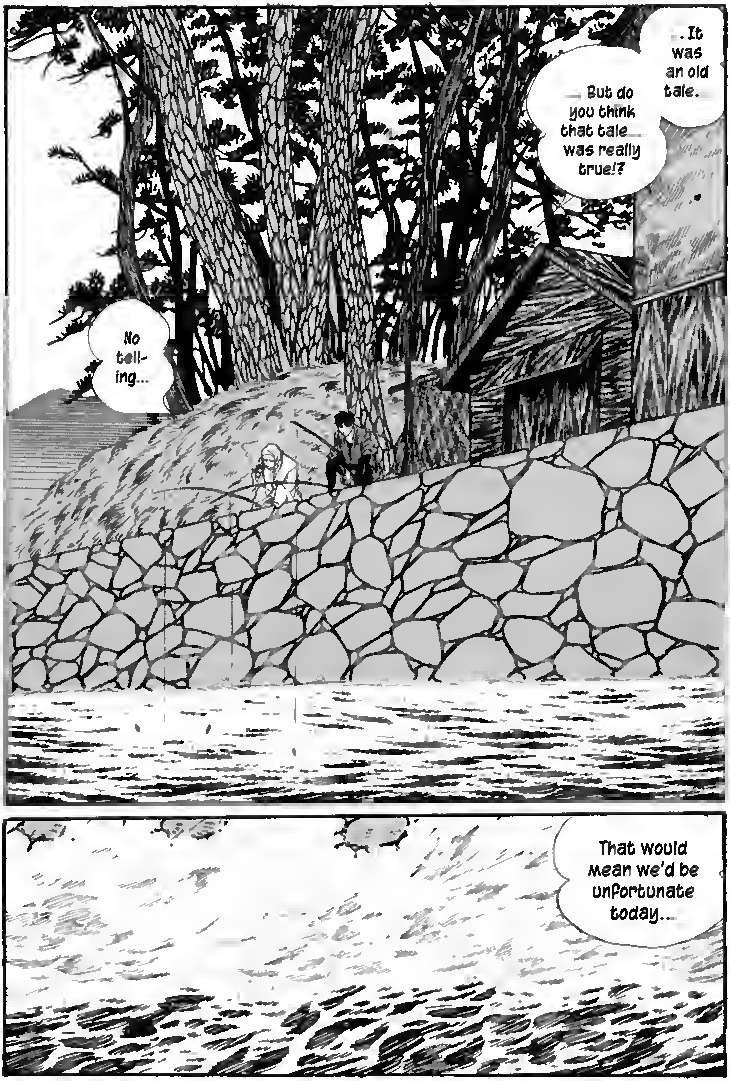

BUT WHEN IT IS LOW, EVERYTHING FAILS.
BUT THERE ARE THOSE THAT FLOAT ON THE SURFACE, EVEN IN THOSE TIMES. AND THAT IS LUCK...
...Do you suppose that this moment
when you were saved just before you hanged yourself, is good luck
and your fortune may be starting to turn around?

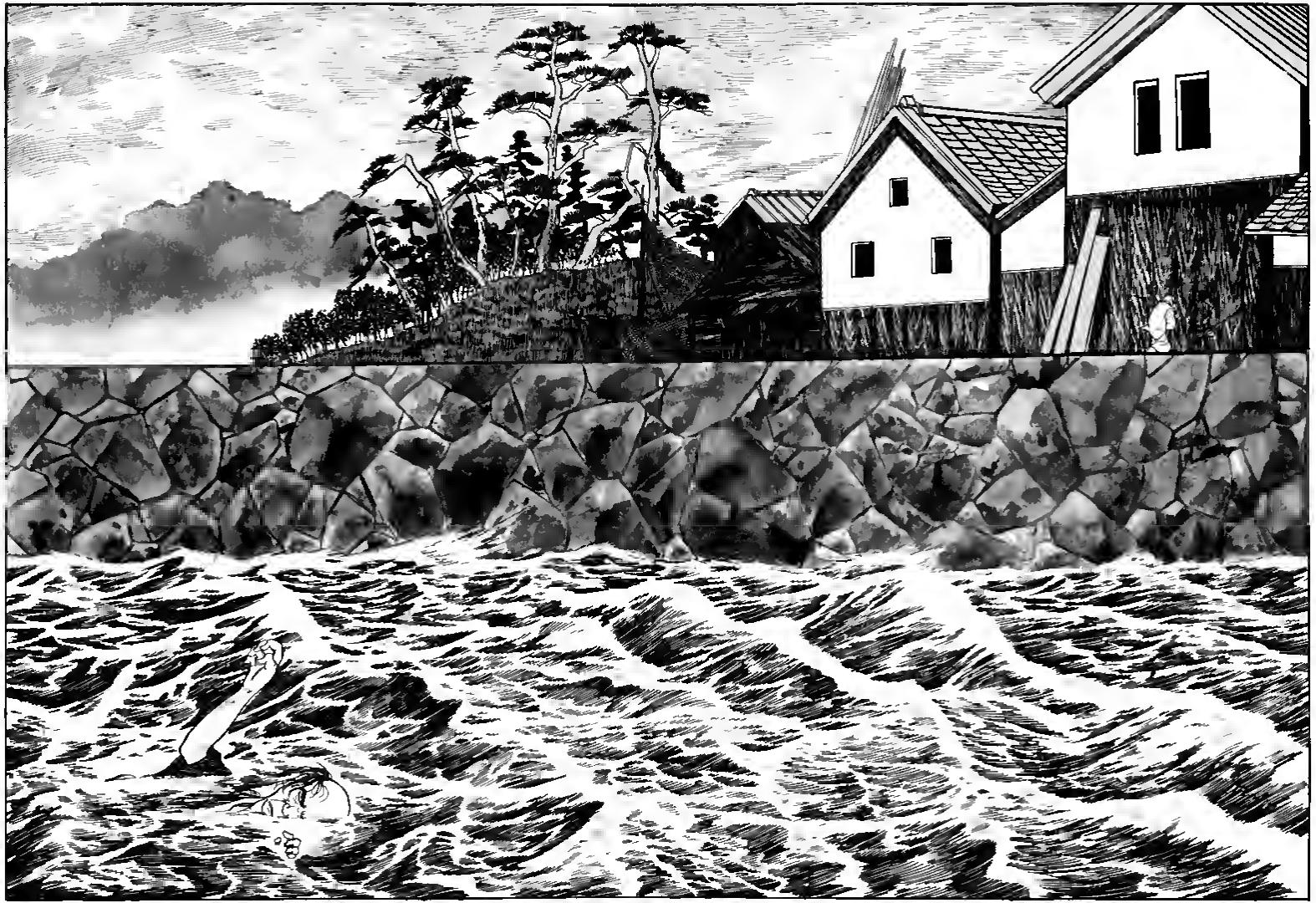
What was that young master's store...z
T-That young master... Where is he now...z
No telling...
Although I do know that his store's fallen through...
For example... That young master
managed to escape, and he still hasn't been made an example of!!
And if that was the young master's luck...
So.. So'z
But you know,
that's just the young master's casa
You still have luck of your own.
I guess I'll manage now...
Thank you!
I understand...!!
...I got it
You just won't know till you try
Now cheer up...
Isn't going against the flow just another way to live your life'z
...Then that's good!!
...Don't feel like hanging yourself anymore, do ya'z

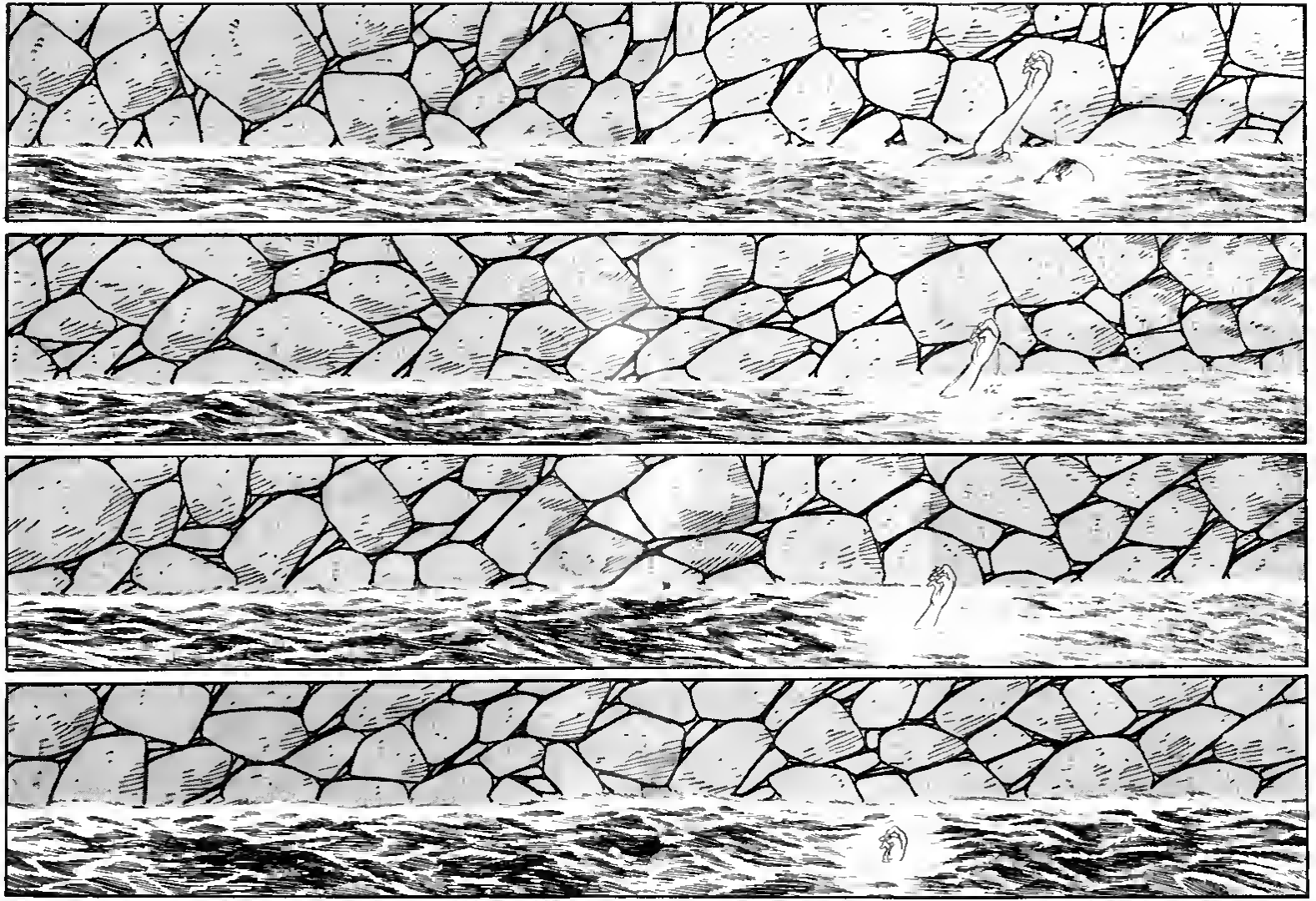
Still, what dull thief-takers you are.
Hehhehhe... Sorry, I made you two prisoners of my tale.
Well then... I'd better get going...

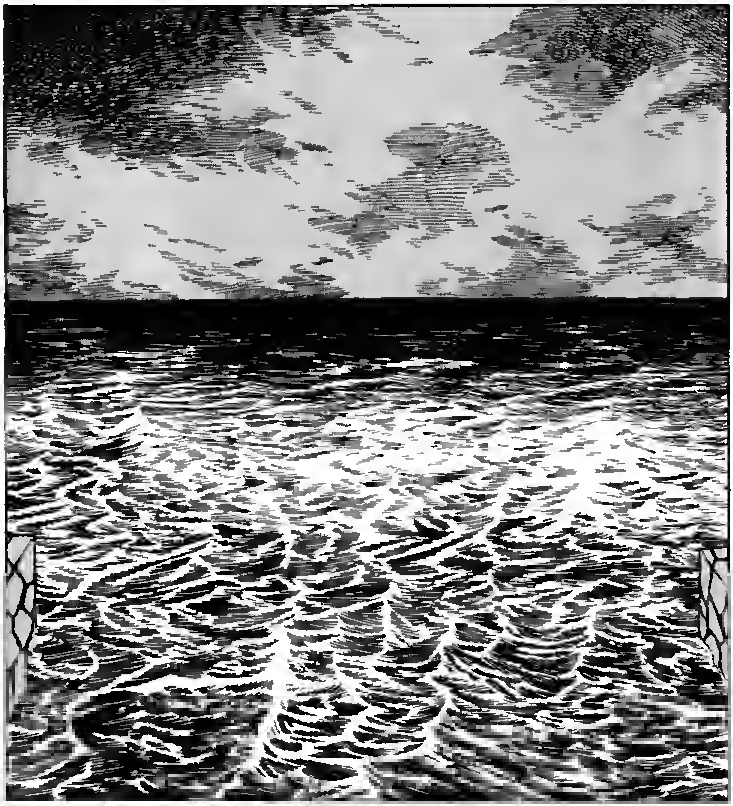

...Hey, hold on.
That... young Master in your story...
Is it...
You...!?
IF you were the real deal, you'd have chewed Me out by now.
Keh... hehe-hehe..
You're right!!
Act-ually...
That what you think?


I'm still stuck in low tide... Luck hasn't come my way at all.
And.. as you can very well see,
ニヤリ
Hehehe.. If that's what the skillful Sabu says, it's gotta be right.
...No, I think... he's pretty lucky.


...It was an old tale.
...But do you think that tale... was really true!?
No telling...
That would mean we'd be unfortunate today...







March 1970: "Low Tide" (FIN)

佐武と市捕物控[5]　暫

小学館文庫

石森章太郎
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